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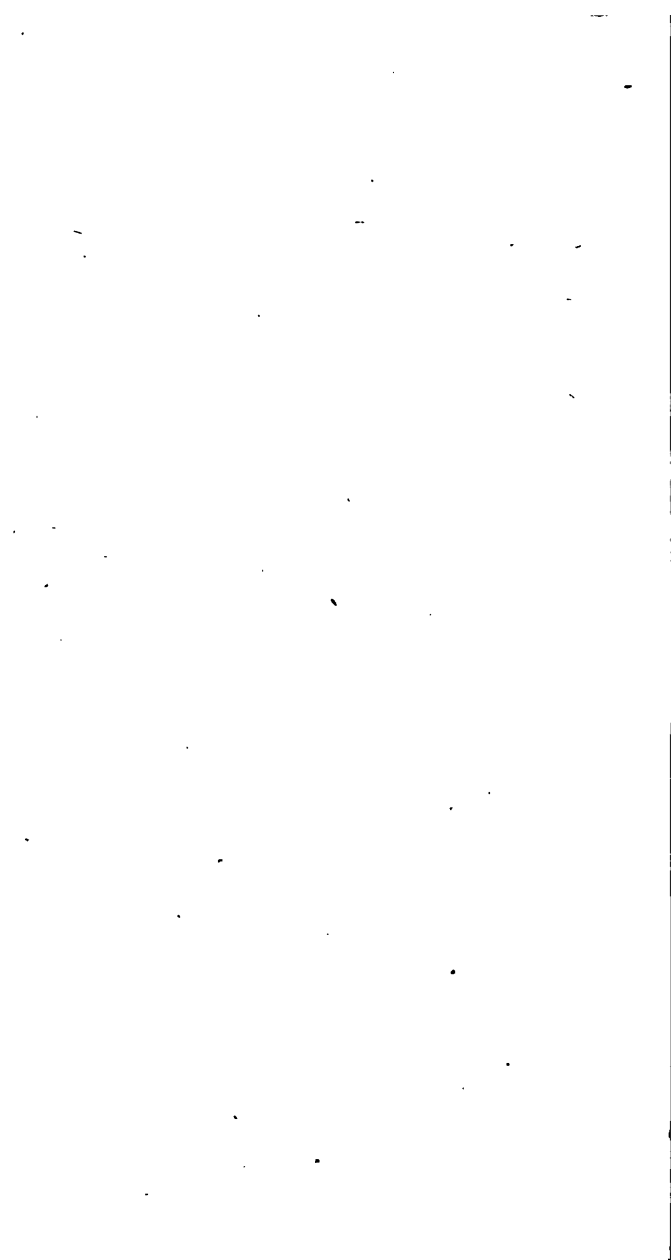




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THE
DISCARDED SON;
OR,
HAUNT OF THE BANDITTI.
A Tale.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY REGINA MARIA ROCHE,
AUTHOR OF THE CHILDREN OF THE ABBEY, &c.

Thou hast been
As one in suffering all, that suffers nothing;
A man who Fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and blest are they
Whose blood and judgment mingled are so well,
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger,
To sound what stop she please.

SHAKESPEARE.

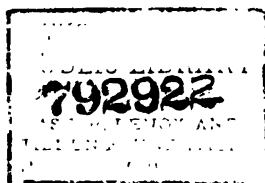
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1807.



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THE DISCARDED SON.

CHAP. I.

"In struggling with misfortunes
Lies the proof of virtue : on smooth seas
How many bawble boats dare set their sails,
And make an equal way with firmer vessels !
But let the tempest once enrage the sea,
And then behold the strong-ribb'd *Argosie*
Bounding between the ocean and the air,
Like *Perseus* mounted on his *Pegasus* :
Then where are those weak rivals of the main !
Or to avoid a tempest fled to port,
Or made a prey to *Neptune*. Even thus
Do empty show and true priz'd worth divide
In storms of fortune."

SHAKESPEARE.

THAT the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; neither bread to the wise, nor yet riches to the men of understanding, nor favour to men of skill....all ages, all countries have furnished us with instances. Of these, Captain Munro perhaps was not the least striking; gifted by nature with all that was requisite to render him amiable....possessed of every advantage that education and fortune could bestow....born under the happiest auspices, and surrounded, on his outset in life, by friends affectionate and anxious in the extreme for his advancement in it, he had not advanced far in his career ere he found himself rapidly descending into the vale of adversity, and others as rapidly ascending to the summit of prosperity, who, from the early disadvantages under which they had laboured, he could not have supposed would have been able to have made a successful effort to approach it.

Of these, the chances and changes of this mortal state, the little fortitude man would have to support himself beneath them, but for the strength and consolation derived

from religion, Captain Munro deeply pondered, as he journeyed from Glengary Castle, the residence of his father, towards his own.

The day was so far advanced when he remounted his horse at the ancient gateway of the castle, for the last time, he was inclined to believe, as no consideration whatever should induce him again, he determined, to seek a reconciliation with his father so cruelly, so insultingly had his overtures for one been now rejected.

Rain also fell in torrents, and the wind swept in hollow gusts over the heath, driving before it the withered burrs, and making the old trees, that scantily dotted the soil, groan beneath its fury.

But notwithstanding the resentment which glowed in his breast....notwithstanding the violence of the tempest to which he was exposed, Captain Munro, on reaching the top of a hill that afforded a view of his native home, could not prevent himself from checking his horse, in order to indulge himself with another view of it...yes, indulge ; for though it no longer afforded him a shelter, he could not forget the happy days in which it had done so ; and the remembrance of these made him feel something of that kind of pleasure in gazing on it, he would have done in contemplating the features of an old friend. The idea of his departed mother, the tenderest of parents, the most amiable of women, was associated with every view, with every recollection of it. He sighed as her memory now revived in his mind, and involuntary thought what she must suffer if departed spirits were allowed to review the transactions of this world, at the shameless scenes now passing in the mansion to which she had given consequence and estimation.

" But heaven," exclaimed he, suddenly and aloud, with an outstretched arm and uplifted eyes, " heaven would not be heaven, were the cares, the inquietudes of this life to gain admission to it. No....all there is peace and joy ; no tear is in the eye, no sorrow in the heart, to engender one. Happy state of rest ; happy he, be his troubles what they may, whose conscience insures him such....Oh God !" he continued, with increasing fervour, " let me never be deprived of this last consolation ;

though happiness may be denied me here, let me never despair of it hereafter....Nor will I despair of it here," he added, after a pause ; " for to despair, is to doubt the goodness of that Being who has promised to befriend those that put their trust in him. As the sun will again look forth, in all his beauty, upon these now streaming fields ; as the clouds which veil the heavens will be dispersed, so will I hope for the restoration of prosperity, and the dispersion of the clouds that now obscure my horizon."

He cast another lingering look at old Glengary (as he styled the castle,) and rode on. While he pursues his journey, we shall take a retrospective view of his life.

Captain Robert Munro was the only child of a Scotch gentleman of considerable property, and who bestowed on him an education suitable to his prospects. Disliking a life of idleness for him, in consequence of the dissipation he had known such to occasion, he intended him for one of the learned professions : this intention proved by no means agreeable to the young gentleman ; he possessed an ardent temper, an enthusiastic imagination, had heard, like Douglas, of battles, and longed to follow to the field some warlike lord....in short, he was too much fired, by what he had heard of the deeds of heroes, not to resolve on seeking, like them, to immortalize himself in the fields of the valiant. His father warmly opposed this resolution ; but, although his mother dreaded the dangers attached to a military life, the constant and animated pleadings of this her adored son, by degrees obtained her acquiescence to his wishes ; she became his advocate, and soon prevailed on his father to purchase a commission for him in a marching regiment, which, shortly after he had entered, was ordered on foreign service. During the period of his continuance abroad, young Munro visited various climates, and had ample experience of the dangers incidental to his profession, but which neither damped his spirit, nor for an instant caused him to regret the one he had chosen. This, however, was by no means the case with his parents ; they never ceased lamenting it, more especially when intelligence reached them of his having been dreadfully

wounded in an engagement in one of the West India islands ; intelligence which was speedily followed by his return to his native kingdom, owing to the advice of his physicians, who, without such a measure, protested his recovery was every thing but impossible.

His mother made use of the opportunity his return afforded, to endeavour to prevail on him to quit the army, but, though naturally of a yielding disposition, without avail, since he was now not only more attached than ever to his profession, but conceived his leaving it at this crisis would be to compromise his honour, as he doubted not his doing so would be imputed to the danger he had been in. Finding him inexorable, she prevailed on his father to purchase him a troop in a regiment of dragoons, in consequence of being informed, by some military friends, the cavalry was not so liable to be ordered abroad as the infantry. Of what she had done he received no intimation, until his promotion appeared in the gazette. The young captain would infinitely have preferred continuing in his old regiment, as in it he fancied he should have had a quicker opportunity of reaping the laurels he was so ambitious of obtaining... that he would have done so, however, neither his filial duty or grateful nature, would permit his acknowledging to his idolizing mother.

The monotonous life to which he found himself doomed on joining his new regiment, quartered in a country town in England, by no means accorded with his active spirit. He derived, however, one advantage from it... that of being able to renew the studies which the pressure of his professional duties, while abroad, had obliged him to suspend ; but he was not allowed to pursue them without interruption....there were in this corps, as there are in many others, several idle dissipated characters, disinclined to good themselves, and equally so to let others. These beset Munro, and, by degrees, drew him into the pernicious practice of gaming, in which he was too great a novice not to let them reap all the advantages they wished for. In consequence his drafts upon his father became so frequent, and so considerable, that a serious investigation into the cause of them at length took place.

Munro shrunk not from it ; he candidly answered the enquiries addressed to him, was admonished by his mother of the enormity of the vice he had been led into, solemnly abjured it, and was forgiven, at least by her. The mind however, which has been for any period dissipated, cannot immediately revert to rational pursuits....like the sea after a storm, it requires some time to subside into calmness : Munro more eagerly, therefore, than ever, though always from a lively and social temper so inclined, entered into company. Amongst the families in the neighbourhood in which he was quartered, who paid particular attention to him and his brother officers, was that of a respectable merchant, who, after making a handsome fortune in Cadiz, had returned to spend the fruits of his industry in his native country. As he was quitting Spain there was committed to his care a young Spanish lady, for the purpose of having her educated in England. Her education was completed just as Munro became acquainted with her, and she only delayed returning to her native country till she had acquired that perfect knowledge of the manners and customs of the people she had been brought up amongst, which while at school, it was impossible for her to do. Nothing could be more attractive, more engaging than she was ; but in place of giving a description of her, we will give the animated one the Chevalier de Bourgoanne has given of her countrywomen in general, as one she perfectly accorded with.

“ Nothing,” says he, “ is more engaging than a young female Spaniard at fifteen years of age....a face perfectly oval ; hair of a fine clear auburn, equally divided on the forehead, and only bound by a silk net ; large black eyes ; a mouth full of graces ; an attitude always modest ; a simple habit of neat black serge, exactly fitting the body, and gently pressing the wrist ; a little hand, perfectly proportioned ; in fine, every thing charms in these youthful virgins : they recal to our recollection the softness, beauty, dress, and simplicity of the young Grecian females, of whom antiquity has left such elegant models....the angels in Spanish comedy are always represented by young girls.”

The heart of our young soldier was susceptible, in the extreme, of the power of beauty, particularly when com-

bined, as was the case in the present instance, with elegance, modesty, and intelligence ; in short, he soon became the captive of the fair foreigner, nor did she seem insensible to his merits ; but, enamoured as he was, he did not seek to inspire her with a reciprocal passion. There were obstacles, he feared, in the way of their union, which would prove insurmountable ; honour, therefore forbade his endeavouring to create too lively an interest for himself in her heart.... These obstacles were the nationality and bigotry of his father : he determined, however, not to despair altogether of overcoming them, till he had applied to his mother on the subject. Just as he had made up his mind to do this, an express arrived to inform him she was given over : he instantly set off for Scotland, but, notwithstanding his travelling without intermission, he only reached home time enough to assist in paying the last sad duties to her remains. Her death overwhelmed him with the most poignant grief ; in losing her he lost not only the tenderest of parents, but the most faithful of friends, one to whom upon all occasions he could safely open his heart, with confidence of receiving both advice and consolation, did he stand in need of either. But it was not simply grief it excited, it also occasioned repentance, for he now began to think, that the anxiety she suffered, in consequence of his remaining in the army, had shortened her days ; and, from the horror he felt at the idea, he would have given worlds, had they been in his power, to have recalled the period in which he had the power of ceding his wishes to her's. But, alas ! time will not return, neither will the grave give up its dead ; how scrupulous, therefore, should we be in our conduct to our relatives and friends, since, terrible to the heart of feeling is the remorse it experiences for errors not to be repaired.

“ The woods, the wilds, the melancholy glooms ” by which his paternal home was surrounded, too well suited his feelings at this juncture, not to make him wish to continue there some time ; but, even if this had not been the case, he would still have felt this wish on account of his father, to whom, at this period, he conceived his society absolutely indispensable ; he soon, however, found that he

was mistaken in thinking so....that his father had felt but a transient regret, if any, for his mother's loss, and that, for the estimation in which he had been so long held in the neighbourhood, he was solely indebted to her. Mr. Munro was indeed the very reverse of what his amiable lady had made him appear. The defects in his disposition were not known to her till they were married ; but though her uniting her fate with his was in obedience to the wishes of her father, not her own, she as scrupulously concealed them as if he had been her own immediate choice, and she had consequently dreaded their discovery occasioning her judgment to be called in question. She did more than conceal, she tried to remove them, but to no purpose....as he clearly demonstrated, by marrying, a very few weeks after her death, a woman formerly in her service, but whom he had seduced from it, and from that period till the one he made her his wife, kept in an obscure house in the vicinity of the castle.

This event, of which he had neither warning nor suspicion, till it took place, excited feelings in the pure and noble mind of Munro, easier to be conceived than described. It was not, however, so much on account of the ruin in which it threatened to involve his prospects (for he was entirely dependant on his father,) and that he could easily be warped from paying attention to the claims of nature, he had given too striking a proof to permit a doubt to be entertained on the subject, as on account of the disrespect it evinced to the memory of his mother, that he mourned and resented it. That, ere the tomb was well closed upon her, her place should be filled up, by such a woman too....so vile ! so abject ! so despicable ! so every way unworthy of being her successor, filled him with indignation too great for suppression ; in the first paroxysm of which, though his leave of absence was not expired, he fled precipitately from the house, with almost a determination never to enter it again.

Dejected and unhappy, he rejoined his regiment ; but in place of seeking, as he had heretofore done, he now sedulously shunned society, particularly that of the family in which the lovely Spaniard resided ; for since all hope of being united to her was at an end, now that he had lost

the friend, through whose interference alone he had ever believed it possible his father's consent to their being so could be obtained, he thought the sooner they ceased to have any communication with one another the better.

In his resolution of avoiding her he persevered for some time, when one afternoon, as he was returning, heated, fatigued, and covered with dust, from a solitary excursion he had taken to some mountains in the neighbourhood, for the purpose of amusing himself with his gun, he came suddenly upon a large party of ladies and gentlemen on horseback, amongst whom he soon discovered his fair Spaniard and the friends she resided with. The delight which these latter testified at seeing him, the kind reproaches they made him for so long absenting himself from their society, and the earnest manner in which they pressed him to come again amongst them, overcame his honourable, his prudential resolutions. The consequence of his again becoming a visitor at their cheerful, hospitable mansion was, the renewal of his love for the beautiful Spaniard, which absence from her had begun a little to weaken. How he told his soft tale, or she replied to it, is not necessary to mention; suffice, one fine moonlight night, but whether tempted by Cinthia, by Cupid, or by both together, cannot, here at least, be determined, she suffered him to hand her into a chaise-and-four, which stood most conveniently, at the moment, near the garden of her guardian, stept in himself after her, and bid the postillions face to the North. Ere their matrimonial fetters were well rivetted, intelligence of this step was received by Mr. Munro, owing to the vigilant eye which his new helpmate kept upon his son, under the hope of being able to detect him in some act, which should give her an opportunity of completely ruining him with his father, and thus of gratifying the malice his refusing to notice her had engendered in her heart against him; as also of quieting her fears of his yet regaining his wonted ascendancy at home, than which nothing she knew could be more inimical to the designs she entertained upon the fortune he had so long been considered undoubted heir to. Had she been as well acquainted with the disposition of her husband as her predecessor was, she would have spar-

ed herself half the pains she took to aggravate his resentment against his son, as she would then have known he wanted no stimulus to render him cruel and severe to those who in the least offended him. But though this imprudent marriage of his son's galled him, by disappointing the ambitious projects he had formed for him, he still could scarcely regret it, since it furnished him with a plausible pretext for exiling him from his society, and thus freeing himself from a person whose presence, from being a reproach, was hateful to him.

The young Captain, accordingly, in reply to the letter he wrote to acquaint him with his marriage, and deprecate the resentment he knew it calculated to excite, received one couched in the most violent and virulent terms, informing him his notification on the subject was totally unnecessary, that no entreaty, no supplication should ever obtain from him the forgiveness he required, nor any share again of his favour or fortune. Munro expected him to be violent in the first instance, and was not, therefore, much disappointed by this letter; notwithstanding it and his preceding conduct, however, he could not, when he took a retrospective view of things, divest himself of a hope that time might yet bring about a reconciliation between them. In the mean while, his wife made a similar application to her father, but to as little purpose....he was not only as national and bigotted as old Munro, but ten times more proud and ambitious, looking forward to nothing less than matching his daughter with some great hidalgo. If therefore the Squire was irritated here, the Don was irritated there, and, in terms scarcely more civil than Munro had expressed himself in to his son, declared his total and solemn renunciation of her. She endeavoured to obtain the merchant's interference with him, but he was so exasperated at what he styled the slippery trick she had played him, the bad example he conceived she had set his daughters, and the suspicious light in which she had made his character appear to her father, whom he had many reasons for wishing to stand well with, that he positively refused either to aid her in this instance, or to have any further communication with her.

Time, at length, that great dispeller of illusions, began to convince Captain Munro, that the hopes with which he had hitherto buoyed himself up, of yet obtaining his father's forgiveness, were completely fallacious. He was no sooner convinced of this, than he made up his mind to leave the army, for some situation that might give him a chance of being able to provide for the family there was a probability of his having. After some little consultation with himself and his fair partner, a country life was decided on, as both were partial to Nature in her rural walks, and he besides had, he conceived, a sufficient knowledge of agriculture to undertake the management of a farm.

These plans for the future, once formed, no time was lost in carrying them into effect. Munro retired from the service on half-pay, taking a difference, with which, and his bond for three hundred pounds, payable in the course of some years, he purchased a small farm, about twenty miles from the place of his nativity, for which he had still something of that kind of attachment some believe the disembodied spirit to have for its deserted mansion of clay.

For some years, during which he became the father of two fine children, a boy and a girl, he went on, perfectly satisfied at having, like Cincinnatus, turned his sword into a ploughshare, when a bad harvest, and the failure of some expensive speculative experiments in agriculture, which he had been induced to make by the example of others in the neighbourhood, so embarrassed him, as to make him resolve on another effort for a reconciliation with his father. To resolve and to execute were almost the same thing with him ; he accordingly, after very little deliberation on the subject, set off early one morning for the ancient mansion of his forefathers.

Various and affecting were the feelings and reflections which arose in his mind, as he drew near it. He could not, without the liveliest emotion, review the haunts of his youth, or think of those halcyon days, in which no cloud rested on his prospects, no care dwelt on his heart, that they brought to his remembrance ; nevertheless, he lighted at the castle with tolerable composure, but which

the sight, or rather the emotion they evinced at seeing him, of some of the old domestics who had lived there during the lifetime of his mother, and whom her successor, partly for the sake of appearances, partly for the sake of gratifying her pride, by being served by those with whom she had served, had been induced to retain, nearly overcame him.

He imagined he should have found it a difficult matter to gain access to his father, but in this he was mistaken ; since he had found the way to the castle again, the old gentleman doubted not his persisting in visiting it until he had seen him ; he, therefore, conceived it better at once to give him an interview, in which opinion his lady and oracle, as with reason she might be styled, since he appealed to her judgment in every instance, perfectly coincided, a coincidence for which he was indebted to her having no longer any apprehension of his son's regaining any influence over him, as also to a wish of beholding him (the younger Munro) mortified and disappointed.... he was accordingly admitted. To detail the particulars of the interview were superfluous ; suffice, after much argument on one side, much altercation and invective on the other, Mr. Munro agreed to take his son again into favour, provided he endeavoured to repudiate his wife, or, at all events, consented to send her and her children to Spain. This inhuman, as well as infamous proposal, was received with the indignation it merited by the person to whom it was addressed....an indignation which nothing but its having come from the lips of a parent could possibly have restrained.

" I am answered, Sir," said he, with forced calmness, but an ashy and quivering lip ; " and that I may not forget what, from the connexion which subsists between us, I still wish to feel for you, I will endeavour to forget what you have said."

He hurried to the hall....the old servants still lingered there, conjecturing and conversing....the pleasing expectations in which they had been rather indulging, from judging a little of the heart of his father by their own, vanished the moment he appeared, as his countenance was a faithful index to the volume within. He pressed

forward to the door, but there was a mist in the air, and a mist in his eyes, at the moment, which prevented his immediately seeing his horse was not there. The poor animal, indeed, had met with a much better reception than he had, having been taken into the stable and well fed. Munro, the instant he missed him, requested he might be brought to him. He was obeyed; but as the old groom (Munro's first instructor in the exercise of riding) held the stirrup for him to mount, he could not forbear saying, he was sure there was a more perilous storm coming on than just then prevailed.

"Aye, and so am I too, Andrew," cried the housekeeper, eagerly coming forward, though at the risk of having the fine crimson-coloured ribbon with which her cap was bedecked, and on which she set no small store, in consequence of thinking it vastly becoming, completely spoiled by the rain...." so am I too; it would be madness, therefore, for any one who could get shelter to go on."

Munro, as he settled himself in his saddle, looked earnestly in her face, and "but, my friend, I can get no shelter here," nearly escaped him; but though he could prevent his tongue from speaking, he could not his looks.

"I have got a snug fire in my room," resumed the housekeeper, who read his countenance quite as well as Lavater himself could have done, "and....and....."

"God bless you all, my good friends!" cried Munro, in a broken and not very articulate voice, his swimming eyes glancing hastily round; "God bless you all!" he repeated more collectedly, and more emphatically, as, kissing and waving his hand, he rode off, leaving them, in defiance of the rain that fell, the wind that howled, rivetted to the spot on which he had parted from them, till he was out of sight.

"Ah, weel, weel!" cried old Andrew, shaking his grey locks, when he could no longer see him, "all in God's own good time....I dare to say you'll be comforted for all this."

"Oh, the savage! the barbarian!" exclaimed the housekeeper, with a kind of wild stare, as if just awaking

from a trance, "to send his own flesh and blood from the door in such an hour. Andrew," lowering her voice a little, "what do you think such a body may expect in the next world?"

Andrew, from perhaps thinking this rather too delicate a subject to enter upon, declined answering the question; but days, weeks, months, nay years elapsed, ere this the last visit of their young master, as they all persisted in calling him, to his native home, and the cruel treatment he had experienced at it, ceased to be talked of by them.

It was late when Munro reached Heathwood Farm, the name of his little purchase; so late, that he found all his family, but his wife in bed. She had determined on not retiring to repose till all hope of his returning that night should be at an end. His doing so destroyed the hopes she was beginning to indulge as he had said, if the issue of his journey was prosperous, he possibly, nay was almost positive he should remain for the night at Glen-gary. She endeavoured, however, to conceal the pangs which disappointment gave her, in order to prevent her husband from being more distressed than, with pain, with heartfelt grief, she already saw he was. In place of questioning him directly as to what had passed, as perhaps some of the fair daughters of Eve might have done, she hastened to assist him in changing his thoroughly soaked garments for dry ones, threw fresh wood upon the almost expiring fire, which soon began to sparkle, and send forth an animating blaze, and spread the remains of her frugal dinner upon the board. Munro was affected, even to tears, by her tender attentions....for, as the glorious orb of day never appears so bright, so cheering, as immediately after a storm, so kindness never makes such an impression upon the heart, as in the moment that it is smarting beneath a sense of the reverse.

He clasped her to his bosom, he thanked her for the comfort which, by her tenderness she administered to his afflictions.

"Should I not be very cruel, very unkind, not to comfort you for what I have brought upon you?" she fondly

asked him, as, sitting on his knee, her arm rested on his shoulder.

"You! you! cried Munro, with a degree of wildness, "you bring afflictions on me!....No, no," he passionately exclaimed, "it is my own imprudence, my own folly,"

"I shall be very angry, very angry indeed," cried Mrs. Munro, feigning a gaily foreign to her heart at the moment, and laying her beautiful little hand upon his mouth, "if you say that again....what, accuse yourself of folly for marrying me!"

"Of something worse," said he with a kind of reproachful bitterness against himself; "for have I not marred all thy flattering prospects by doing so?"

"And have you not equally injured your own?"

"Well, if you do not reproach me," resumed Munro, after a few minutes of thoughtfulness...."if you do not repent our union....."

"I! Oh, if I never have cause to repent any thing more, I shall consider myself a most fortunate woman."

"Then we may yet be happy, spite of fortune," cried her husband, straining her to his heart.

"Nay, can we truly say we are now altogether the reverse, possessed as we are, of health, innocence and liberty?"

"True, true, these are blessings indeed, too great to permit those who possess them to reckon themselves wretched; inestimable blessings, which, with gratitude, I acknowledge ours; and which, with the assistance of Heaven, and by the exertions of industry, I trust....nay, more, I doubt not we shall be able to retain."

"And if we should," eagerly cried his wife, clasping his hands in her's, and looking full in his face, "oh! my dear friend, though the roof that sheltered our heads was ten times more humble than it is, should we not be content?"

Munro bowed his head assentingly....to speak at the moment was impossible.

Munro arose, the morning after his unsuccessful journey to Glengary, with a heavy heart....and, like Shakespeare's splenetic Jacques, well disposed to rail at the world. But as he knew melancholy and misanthropy

would only render bad worse; he checked his present inclination to each, and resolved on losing no time in applying his shoulder to the wheel....that by endeavouring to aid himself by virtuous exertion, he might render himself deserving of that of heaven....The bond for three hundred pounds was about this crisis nearly due; on applying to know whether a renewal of it would be accepted instead of payment, he learned that it had been passed into the hands of a person who either had, or pretended to have, immediate occasion for the money. To prevent unpleasant consequences, therefore, it was requisite it should immediately be discharged; he therefore took the necessary steps for that purpose; and with the sum he with difficulty obtained, discharged his obligation, and freed himself also from some smaller debts, which he had unavoidably contracted, in consequence of the expense and disappointment that had attended his experiments in agriculture.

For some time after this, things went on pretty well at Heathwood; the children thrived apace, and were at once the pride and principal pleasure of their parents, who mutually assisted in the task of instructing them. A thousand times, as the fond father gazed upon them, he wondered how his own could have proved so obdurate to him....“What, what,” he has often exclaimed to himself, as his eyes wandered alternately from one to the other, “could induce me to abandon these creatures? though stained with ten thousand crimes....though loaded with obloquy....though loathed and shunned by all the rest of their species, yet, if sorrowful and contrite they approached my door, could I keep it closed against them?....oh, no!....oh, no!....worlds upon worlds could not tempt, could not prevail on me to do so; their griefs, their shame should be sheltered where their innocence once was, and with their prayers mine should mingle, and be offered up to Heaven for forgiveness for them....that Heaven which disdains not, as its creature man but too frequently does, to accept repentance as an atonement for error.”

But the pleasure which the idolizing parents took in their children was often damped and interrupted by anxiety for their future welfare; unable to make any certain

provision for them, and aware of the precariousness of life, they frequently trembled to think what their destiny might be.

These fears, however, were never encouraged, and often lost, for a considerable period, in their confidence in heaven....As the mind of Osmond (the name of their son) began to expand, Munro felt persuaded, from the genius and understanding he evinced, that if both were properly cultivated, he would in all probability make a distinguished figure in life, and obtain the means, if not of greatly advancing; at least of rendering his family comfortable. This idea no sooner took possession of his mind, than he determined on straining every point to give him a liberal education; accordingly, as soon as he was qualified to be sent thither, he accepted the sacrifice of some rich trinkets of his wife's memorials of happier and more prosperous days, for the purpose of raising a sufficient sum to place and keep him at an English university, which he preferred, on account of the obstacles he doubted not would be thrown in the way of his advancement, by the malice of his grandfather's new connexions, if he attempted to settle in any of the learned professions in Scotland.

For some time after this favourite plan had been carried into execution, Munro felt happier than he had been for a long time before; but here the period allotted for the academic pursuits of Osmond was well more than half expired, the expences attending his being at the university, though none but what were absolutely unavoidable were incurred, so greatly exceeded what he had conceived they would be, that he dreaded he must be under the necessity of recalling him ere his education was completed, and thus of resigning all the flattering visions in which he had so long indulged. More, he dreaded if this should prove the case, seeing him the prey of discontent and langour....unwilling, from the notions he had probably given him, to enter into any other than the line of life which his unfinished education would then incapacitate him for. But the above apprehension was not the only source of anxiety and uneasiness Munro now had; he now began to feel unhappy at seeing his

daughter, to whom, with the assistance of her mother, he had, without sending her from the paternal roof, given an education suitable to her birth, and what there was every reason to suppose her expectations would have been, if he had not been discarded by his family, literally wasting her sweetness on the desert air, excluded from the amusements suitable to her time of life, and destined, to all appearance, either to marry some person inferior to her, or find herself, on advancing in life, a solitary, unconnected being.

"Oh God!" he has frequently exclaimed at these moments, when his heart was weighed down with anxiety about his children, "how maturely should a man weigh every circumstance, ere he enters into a state in which he is liable to incur duties which cannot remain unfulfilled without making him feel torture! How awful is the responsibility that the child attaches to the parent, and yet how often is it thoughtlessly incurred! Oh! in how many instances does passion, headlong passion, make man, notwithstanding all his boasted advantages, his reason, his powers of reflection, appear inferior to the creatures who have only instinct for their guide!—he only seems to take no thought for the future, he only who cannot untwist the ties which nature winds around the heart."

Whatever were the feelings of the young Elizabeth relative to her situation, she carefully confined them to her own bosom; she clearly saw her parents stood too much in need of consolation, not to endeavour to administer it to them by a constant appearance of cheerfulness. She had nearly completed her seventeenth year, at the period her father began to fear his projects relative to her brother must be relinquished, and bore a strong resemblance to her mother, with this difference, that her complexion was fairer, her stature taller, her black eyes still more brilliant and expressive. Her smile evinced the sweetness of her temper, her voice proclaimed the sensibility of her soul, her actions and deportment the goodness of her heart and excellence of her understanding, both of which had been most assiduously cultivated,

She had early been taught the luxury of doing good.

and that a well-improved mind, like a contented heart, was a continual feast....like the woman celebrated in the Proverbs, who clothed her household in scarlet and purple, she stretched out her hand to the needy, though small the offering her narrow circumstances permitted it to contain ; but she remembered the widow's mite, and small as it was, believed it acceptable in the eyes of heaven. Her mother, who had all that inherent grandeur of soul for which the Spaniards are in general distinguished, had rendered her somewhat romantic, not only by their conversation, but the studies in which she had indulged her.

Munro, however, was not displeased at this, since he considered romance the parent of enthusiasm ; without a certain portion of which, he believed it scarcely possible any thing great, any thing glorious could be achieved.

Elizabeth had heard of balls, and plays, and courts, and masquerades, and she was certain they must be all delightful ; yet lively as her imagination was, she could not conceive a higher pleasure to be derived from them than she experienced when seated with an entertaining book, the offspring of some vivid and luxuriant fancy, beneath a fresh tree's shade, inhaling the light breeze that whispered through the foliage, literally wafting both health and harmony.

This pleasure was heightened by its being one she could not always indulge in....for Elizabeth had much to do at home ; she had been brought up to be useful to herself and others, and the principal management of the household concerns devolved on her, as soon as she was of an age to take it upon herself, her mother having a large share of that indolence which in general characterizes the natives of warm climates, particularly those of the one she came from....and wishing, besides, to give her a perfect knowledge of such affairs, in case she came to have a family of her own.

Equal to her love of literature, and taste for it, was Elizabeth's fondness and taste for rural scenery : she was a devotee of Nature's....a bold and beautiful landscape never failed of inspiring her with a thrilling sensation of delight ; nor was there any amusement which afforded greater gratification than did such contemplations.

To range over the slow rising hills....to rest on a rock whence the streamlet distilled....to watch the rising of the golden-haired son of the sky....to behold the clouds of night come rolling down upon the dark brown steeps....the stars of the north rising over the waves of the ocean, and shewing their heads of fire through the flying mists of heaven, were all sources of inexpressible delight to her, such as inspired her mind with the most rapturous enthusiasm, and made her heart beat with the most delicious emotions.

The prospects to which she had been accustomed from infancy, early furnished her with ideas of the sublime, and, though in a lesser degree, the beautiful. The blue-fading mountains of the western Highlands....a vast expanse of ocean and immense forests of fir, composed the horizon she was daily in the habit of contemplating; while nearer, the natural wildness of the scenery was here and there varied and restrained by the hand of cultivation.

The house of Munro was an antique rambling mansion, rough on the outside, and plain within; nothing fine, nothing gaudy was to be seen in any part of it, but in one room fitted up as a chapel for Mrs. Munro, who scrupulously adhered to the faith of her ancestors, and at which a priest, from a neighbouring town, at stated periods officiated.

Mrs. Munro could not forbear expressing a wish to be allowed to bring up her daughter at least in her own persuasion; but a wish which she relinquished without a murmur, since, though devout, she was not bigotted, on her husband's candidly informing her that the indulgence of it would in all probability render his father more averse than ever to a reconciliation with him, his bigotry being excessive, and of consequence, his dislike to all who either differed, or shewed any indulgence to those who did, in the article of religion from him.

In allowing his daughter to have been educated in the religious tenets of her mother, Munro would have done no violence to his own feelings; since, though decidedly of opinion that, from the wavering nature of man, a settled form of religion was necessary for all, he was equal-

ly so, that if the heart was sincere in its devotions, it mattered not to God what that form was. In short, various were the roads, he conceived, to heaven; and that the untutored Indian, who fancies he sees God in the clouds, and hears him in the winds, so he performs his allotted part to the best of his abilities, will have an equal chance of happiness with the most enlightened bishop.... But to revert to the house. A few forest trees, of ancient date, cast a shade upon the windows; and it was still further shrowded by a luxuriant shrubbery. Here intermingled the various beauties of

..... "Laburnam, rich
 Its streaming gold; syringa iv'ry pure;
 The scented and the scentless rose; this red
 And of an humbler growth, the other tall,
 And throwing up into the darkest gloom
 Of neighb'ring cypress, or more sable yew,
 Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf
 That the wind severs from the broken wave;
 The lilac, various in array, now white,
 Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set
 With purple spikes pyramidal, as if
 Studious of ornament, yet unresolv'd
 Which hue she most approv'd, she chose them all.
 Copious of flow'rs the woodbine, pale and wan,
 But well compensating her sickly looks
 With never-cloying odours, early and late.
 Hypericum all blown, so thick a swarm
 Of flow'rs, like flies cloathing her slender rods,
 That scarce a leaf appears; mezerion too,
 Though leafless, well attir'd, and thick beset
 With blushing wreaths, investing ev'ry spray,
 Althæa with the purple eye; the broom,
 Yellow and bright, as bullion unalloy'd,
 Her blossoms; and luxuriant above all
 The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,
 The deep dark green of whose unvarnish'd leaf
 Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more
 The bright profusion of her scatter'd stars."

This luxuriant shrubbery was laid out in winding walks, the whole enclosed by a neat paling, in which were different openings leading to sequestered seats, situated so as to command the most pleasing views of the distant country.

The house stood upon an extensive heath, to the wildness of which the fields and copses, together with the

sheltered cots, and here and there cultivated farms, which were discovered at its verge, formed an agreeable contrast. The central track through the heath became lost at some distance from the house, in the tangled mazes of what had formerly been a noble forest, but of which, except a quantity of underwood, no vestiges, save a few venerable trees, now remained ; beneath the shadow of whose melancholy boughs, the ruins of a once celebrated abbey were espied, now literally

“ A place of tombs,
Waste, desolate, where ruin dreary dwelt,
Brooding o'er sightless skulls and crumbling bones ;
Ghastful he sat, and eyed with stedfast glare
(Sad trophies of his power, where ivy twines
Its fatal green around) the falling roof,
The time-struck arch, the column grey with moss,
The leaning wall, the sculptur'd stone defac'd,
Whose monumental flatt'ry, mix'd with dust,
Now hid the name it vainly meant to raise.
All was dread silence here and undisturb'd,
Save what the wind sigh'd, and the wailing owl
Scream'd solitary to the mournful moon.”

The far-extended walls of this edifice, magnificent in decay, and whether tinted with the warm glow of the setting sun, or silvered by the beams of the pale moon, presenting an interesting object to the eye of taste feeling, gave an adequate idea of the grandeur of its original dimensions, and was still capable of affording a temporary shelter. Amidst the brambles and brushwood that overgrew the ground about it, “ grey stones, with their heads of moss,” here and there betrayed the narrow houses of death....the graves of those who had long since ceased to converse with mortal men.

This decaying pile was a favourite haunt of Elizabeth's ; the whispering echoes which her stealing steps through its long-drawn aisles and fretted vaults awakened, where once the pealing anthem swelled the note of praise, gave rise to sensations pleasingly awful. The solemn meditations it led to, suited the tender pensiveness of her spirit....a tenderness, a pensiveness encreased by the scenes she delighted to frequent ; for as an elegant writer has observed....“ The lonely mountain and

the silent grove seldom fail of encreasing the susceptibility of the female bosom."

Wrapped in these meditations, she, not unfrequently wandered about, unmindful of how the minutes waned, till roused to recollection by some harsh note, some discordant cry, the hooting of the owl, or the chattering of the daws, that held their unmolested reign within the ruin. These, however, were not the only inhabitants it had, if the reports of the country people in its vicinity were to be believed. Tradition had given it other tenants, of which superstition did not attempt to dispossess it.... indeed it would have been rather unkind and unmannerly to have done so, as for a considerable time they gave no cause of complaint whatever to their neighbours. But every thing in this life, sooner or later, must have an end, and so had their peaceable behaviour; for just about the period that Munro began to experience such uneasiness about his son, the whole neighbourhood was thrown into a state of confusion and dismay, in consequence of the malicious tricks and vagaries these idle and airy gentry began to play. Willingly would the affrighted rustics have entered into a subscription to defray the expence of sending them to join Pharoah and his host in the Red Sea....but, alas! that they knew not how to set about the matter.

Munro at first imputed their terror to the power of imagination, but a very short time served to convince him, from the testimony of his own senses, that there was some real foundation for it, as once or twice, in passing the now dreaded ruin at rather a late hour, and pausing near it, in consequence of the prevailing report, he clearly heard noises from within, well calculated to alarm the unenlightened mind.... This circumstance induced him, more than once, to go over the building in the day-time, and take his station near it at night; but nothing resulted from this measure, as he had rather hoped and expected would be the case, to enable him to prove, to his rustic neighbours, that their credulity was grossly imposed upon, doubtless for something more than the mere purpose of frightening them.

The consternation gradually became greater, and idle-

ness, gossiping, and inebriety, ensued from it. The alehouses alone had reason to rejoice at the general disturbance and dismay, as, owing to these, they were regularly filled every evening after sunset, and continued so till sunrise. This conduct of the lower rustics was so grievous and alarming to the higher ones, particularly as the harvest was just on the point of commencing, not to give rise to much consultation among them; but from which, owing to want of resolution in some, and obstinacy in others, no good whatever resulted.

Munro, who purposely joined in all their deliberations on the subject, proposed a nightly watch being kept for some time in the abbey; but this proposition was almost unanimously rejected. At length, one evening, a farmer of the name of Stubbs, whose land joined his, came into a field where he was, and after some little conversation, "Captain," said he, "I have been thinking of what you said about passing a night or two in that crazy old building yonder, which, God forgive me for saying such wicked words, I wish the devil had dropt some of his burning brimstone into long ago, for then we should not have been in such a mess as we are now in about it; and if so be as how you still think it would be a good thing to do, why I am agreeable to doing so along with you; for one may as well....nay, had better run the risk of facing old Nick himself (the Lord save and defend us from ever seeing his cloven feet or long tail,) as let matters go on this way. There was last night, after being comfortably settled in bed and asleep, I was forced to get up to go and pen the sheep myself, because the boy that looks a'ter them could neither be made to do so by fair or by foul means; flat and plain he told his mistress the devil might pen them for him....he wouldn't run the risk of his life or his senses by going a'ter them to the ruin, about which they were feeding....not he, for the best wether in the flock."

Munro assured the farmer he was as well inclined as ever to do what he had proposed, as a probable means of detecting the nocturnal disturbers of the abbey. He advised him, however, to keep their intention a profound secret, which the other readily promised; and it was

agreed that they should go thither that very night, as soon as darkness had spread its raven wings over the hemisphere. This agreement Munro could not think of concealing from his family, well knowing the uneasiness his absence from home for a night would occasion, if they could not account for it....At the appointed hour Stubbs called upon him, and both immediately proceeded on their secret expedition. Munro armed with a sword, and his companion with a pitch-fork, as the weapon he was best accustomed to, but which for the present was laid across a basket of provisions, that, together with a dark lanthorn, he carried.

Munro had scarcely entered the desolated pile, ere its cold and dampness struck a chill to his heart, as did its darkness to that of the farmer. What the latter did not like, he never patiently endured, except when compelled to do so : he therefore never ceased groping about till he had collected a sufficient quantity of sticks and rotten wood, to form a large pile in the stone wall in which they were, and to which (notwithstanding all the remonstrances of Munro, who represented to him the little probability there was of their being able to make any discovery, if they exposed themselves to detection, as they must inevitably do, by surrounding themselves with light) he set fire.

"Why dang it....dang it, Captain," cried the farmer, rubbing his head as soon as he had satisfied himself, "'tis bad enough in any way to be here : but to be so in the cold and dark, would be more than any one could put up with. I am sure you may be glad I have lit a fire, for you look as cold and blue, as the saying is, as a calf of a frosty morning. Besides, Captain, if there was any thing to be seen, how the duce could we see it without light ?"

"True, true, my friend," replied Munro with affected gravity ; I see you are at no loss for sound argument to support the propriety of what you do."

"Why yes," cried the farmer, with a look of the most perfect self-complacency, "why yes," his broad features distended by a smile of mingled satisfaction and importance, and giving what he called a knowing look, "I think I know what I am about, but I shouldn't be vain....noa !

noa !” shaking his head, “ I should not indeed ; for it is my poor father, God rest his soul, I may thank for being what I am, for he gave me good learning as soon as I could take it. I was for two years and three months at school, at the rate of a crown a-quarter, kept by.....”

“ Oh well,” said Munro, perhaps not consciously interrupting him, “ the expence was not thrown away.”

“ No, no, that’s what father said....” “ Boy,” he has often and often said, “ I don’t grudge what I have laid out upon your learning, because I see as how you takes to it.” Just as you and I, Captain, said last autumn, about our two corn fields that cost us so much to manure....“ We don’t grudge,” says we, “ the expence these here fields have cost us in manuring, because they have yielded us such a plentiful crop this season.

On each side of the yawning chasm in which Stubbs had kindled the fire, a kind of rude and partly-demolished bench projected a little way into the hall, on which he and his companion seated themselves opposite one another ; the basket of provisions, containing a jar of strong ale, ham, cheese, and bread, was unpacked and placed between them, and they soon fell to upon its contents. But though the farmer had recourse to every method in his power to keep up his spirits, and continued to talk boldly, it was evident to Munro that he began to grow faint-hearted : this however, he did not pretend to see, trusting that by giving him credit for courage, he should inspirit him sufficiently to enable him to retain, at least the semblance of it.... That a scene more calculated than the present to affect a mind inclined to superstition, could not well be found, he could not help acknowledging to himself, and of course, in some degree excusing the gradual evaporation of poor Stubbs’s valour. The building was not only known to be remote from every inhabited one, but the wind made a hollow and a moaning noise throughout it, that might well at times be mistaken for the sighings and lamentations of distress : a shattered staircase descended to the hall, above which all appeared involved in ruin, mystery, and darkness ; while on the green and slimy walls, the quivering and uncertain light threw shadows more fantastic than any

but the most disordered imagination could possibly have given birth to.

"It is a cheerless spot indeed," said he, after a short interval of silence, during which his eye had been busily employed in looking about him; "many years, I doubt, have elapsed since any thing like social comfort has before been seen in it."

"Yes, and many more, should it last so long, will pass away, ere any thing of the like will be seen again in it," replied the farmer; "for I am beginning to think, Captain, that ghost-watching is not the most agreeable employment in the world; and as to my neighbours, I needn't say what their opinion on the subject is."

"The speedy detection of those who occasioned them so much uneasiness, will, I trust, render any further watching unnecessary," answered Munro.



CHAP. II.

"Heav'n has to all allotted, soon or late,
Some lucky revolutions of their fate,
Whose motions, if we watch and guide with skill,
(For human good depends on human will.)
Our fortune rolls as from a smooth descent,
And from the first impression takes the bent;
But, if unseiz'd, she glides away like wind,
And leaves repenting Folly far behind."

DRYDEN.

"NOW that we are upon the subject of ghosts and hobgoblins, and such like trumpery, pray may I ask you Captain, (for I know you are a good scholar, and have seen a good deal of the world, and can, therefore, give an opinion on these matters one may depend on,) do you think," cried the farmer, making an effort, but a vain one, the bench being fastened to the ground, to pull

his seat nearer to Munro, "that a man having all the Christian duties paid to his remains, such as having a good coffin given to him, and being laid in a snug grave, either has a right to, or can come back to disturb his neighbours, which, God knows, perhaps, he did sufficiently while living?"

"With God nothing is impossible," replied Munro, in a solemn tone? "but it seems most improbable, to a mind of sense and reflection at least, that a Being of mercy and benevolence, such as he is represented, such as daily experience and observation convince us he is, for who is there that has not felt his manifold mercies and loving-kindness, should permit his creatures to be needlessly tormented; it is, therefore, my firm, my immutable opinion, that the spirit once returned unto God, who gave it, it revisits this nether scene no more, "to make night hideous, and us....."

"Aye, aye," eagerly interrupted the farmer, "you may well say that, indeed....to make night hideous.... well, well, this is comfortable," wiping his forehead (which was a little damp at the moment, but whether from the heat of the fire, or whether from the oozing out of his valour, cannot be determined), with the corner of his coloured neckcloth; "I shall tell my folks at home what you have said, in hopes it may have some effect upon them; for, if a mouse does but scratch now in the cupboard, or a bat fly across the room, Lord, there is such a kick-up in a moment, that one would be tempted to think Bedlam was broke loose."

They continued to converse with very little intermission, but much against the inclination of Munro, as too much silence could not, he conceived, be observed, for the enabling them to accomplish the purpose which had brought them to the building. The farmer, however derived a kind of false courage, from hearing the sound of his own voice and his companion's, which rendered him regardless of the remonstrances Munro made on the subject. At length, after a long sitting, and when the contents of the basket, and the fire, and light in the lanthorn, were nearly exhausted, the farmer, whose patience was also by the same time equally so,

proposed their breaking up watch for that night : to which proposal Munro, who, from the conduct the farmer had pursued, had no idea of their being able to effect any discovery, was on the point of acquiescing, when a tremendous noise, immediately over their heads, resembling that which thunder makes when rumbling over a building, arrested his words. He started, grasped his sword with firmness, and looked around him ; while the eyes of the farmer began to stare, his teeth to chatter, and his complexion to assume a livid hue. The rumbling noise over head continued for some minutes, and was then succeeded by shrieks, or rather yells, of a most terrific nature, such as torture alone could be supposed to occasion.

“ Oh, Captain, Captain !” cried the farmer, on hearing these appalling sounds, and starting from the bench to which terror had at first rivetted him....“ Oh, Captain, Captain !” extending his arms towards him.

Munro raised his finger significantly to mention him to silence : the next instant he heard the stairs creaking, he glanced his quick eye upwards, and at the head perceived a tall skeleton-like figure, enveloped in what appeared to be a winding-sheet, and surrounded by a pale luminous light. He instantly snatched up the lanthorn, and darted to the staircase, forgetful of its shattered state ; scarcely, however, had he set his foot on it, ere he was reminded of this by the failure of one of the steps, and but that he caught, as it gave way, at a banister, he must have fallen through the chasm he had thus made. He now recollected what sudden emotion had before rendered him forgetful of, that, at the side of the staircase, there was a door leading to a narrow shelving passage, ending at a flight of winding steps, which he doubted not having a communication with the apartments above ; he therefore hastened onward, and had just reached them, when the frightful apparition he was in quest of rushed down them, and passing him with the quickness of lightning, vanished through a small space at the side of the passage which a door had once occupied. Munro pursued, and found himself in a small square stone room, half sunk under ground, and which he perfectly recol-

lected having examined before, but without being able to discover more than one inlet into it. Again he went round it, feeling as he did so, all along the walls, but without meeting with any thing to impede the progress of his hand. After a little deliberation, he determined on pursuing this adventure no further for the present, since he could not avoid thinking his doing so incompatible with his safety, alone and unaided as he was ; besides, he doubted not the farmer being in want of his assistance. He accordingly hastened back to the hall, where he found him exactly in the same spot in which he had left him, his pitchfork presented, his eyes staring wildly, his hair upright, every feature, in short, betokening horror and dismay. Munro shook him several times by the shoulder, and then made him swallow some ale which fortunately remained ; this brought him a little to himself, and after heaving a deep sigh, or rather groan, and wiping his damp forehead....“ Well, Captain, well,” cried he, “ did you catch it ?” Munro informed him of the issue of the adventure. “ The Lord have mercy upon us !” cried he, after hearing it....“ Captain, Captain, let us be going : but don’t ye think, don’t ye that I’m afraid....no, no, if I had been so, instead of keeping my ground here, as you yourself saw I did, I should have kept at your heels.”

“ Oh, no doubt,” cried Munro encouragingly ; “ but come, as you say, my good friend, let us be off, for we shall make no further discovery here to-night, I am sure. Take my advice, and keep what we have seen a secret, or else things will be worse than ever ; and also take my word for it, that the spirit we saw this night is one enveloped in wicked flesh and blood, to which, I most sincerely hope, you may yet have an opportunity of giving a good ducking in your horse-pond, since I can scarcely think any punishment too severe for the person who wantonly sports with the feelings of his fellow-creatures.”

The farmer readily promised the secrecy he desired, but by his silence relative to what he had said of the apparition, evidently proved he could not be persuaded to be of his opinion respecting it. They quitted the

building, and Munro saw his companion safely housed ere he parted from him.

The next day he re-examined the abbey more narrowly than he had ever done before, but without being able to discover the traces of any human beings, but the farmer and himself, having been lately in it. He again proposed having a watch kept there a few nights, but the proposal was now so universally negatived, and his wife and daughter expressed such uneasiness at the idea of his going thither again at such a time, that he gave up all intention of doing so.

His anxiety about his son now daily encreased, as every day tended still further to convince him of the impracticability of keeping him much longer at the University, except some unexpected change took place in his circumstances, of which he had not the remotest expectation; no, his prospects were now, on every side, cheerless and barren; and, by degrees, his incessant contemplation of them made him acquire a look of moody care, which drew upon him the observations of his neighbours, and excited various conjectures among them as to the cause of it; some thought one thing, some another; all agreed, however, that it must be something very grievous which thus weighed upon him.

Farmer Stubbs, who, whatever may be thought to the contrary, was (ghosts and such like trumpery, as he styled them, out of the question) not only one of the bravest but homestest of men, saw and thought as much as his neighbours, but, unlike them, remained silent with respect both to his remarks and surmises, it being a maxim with him, that a man has no right to busy himself, unasked, about the affairs of another. He had somehow (doubtless from that secret sympathy which, be their education ever so different, exists between worthy hearts,) contracted a vast liking for the Captain, he said, such as at any time would have made him fight for him through thick and thin; and it now vexed him to the soul, though he said nothing about the matter, to see him drooping his head, like a blighted ear of corn, and going about as if crazed with care.

One evening, as this honest farmer was digging in a field, he was joined by a neighbour of the name of Watkins, a sly, cunning, canting man, of Methodistical manners and appearances, who, though he professed to love good works above all things, was supposed to love good cheer better; and who, having by some means or other (not altogether to his credit, if the report of the goddess who blew the brazen trump in the little village of Heathwood was to be believed) scraped together sufficient to permit him to indulge his propensity for idleness, the offspring of a creeping, grovelling disposition, passed much of his time in running about to collect news of his neighbours, which he detailed with the utmost avidity, especially if it was of an unfavourable nature, as he was quite as malicious and envious as he was greedy and hypocritical.

Against Munro he had what is vulgarly called a particular grudge, owing to his having espoused, and finally enabled her to triumph over him, the cause of a poor widow, who, by some unexpected casualty, had fallen into his power; as also on account of his having repulsed the efforts he made to be on familiar terms with him and his family.

Stubbs, who had but little notion of ceremony, and who, moreover, did every thing but hate Watkins, for to do that he knew would be unchristian-like, took no notice whatever of his approach, but continued digging away as if he had seen no one. Watkins, who knew him well, and stood much in dread of him, so much, indeed, that he did every thing he could think of as likely to conciliate his regard, attempted not to interrupt him by speaking, till he paused to take breath; he then, after "A fine evening, neighbour, a fine evening," added, with what he intended for an approving smile.... "I see thou dost not eat the bread of idleness."

"No," replied Stubbs, as, after rubbing his hand against his waistcoat, he dug his spade with the assistance of his foot, again into the ground, "no 'tis bad bread for any one."

"Truly thou sayest right in saying so; those who hanker after it will surely meet with punishment."

“Doubtless, doubtless,” returned the farmer, again applying his foot to the spade.

“I say neighbour,” resumed Watkins, after a short pause....“I say,” twitching him by the sleeve, and pointing with his thumb over his left shoulder towards the house of Munro, conspicuous from the spot on which they were, “some folks yonder will soon repent, if they already don’t, having indulged themselves in it.”

“Well, what’s that to you?” replied the other, but without seeming to understand who he alluded to; “you won’t be obliged also to repent for their having done so.”

“Me! no, God forbid that any of us should be obliged to answer for the sins or indiscretions of others!”

“Why, I believe,” and Stubbs leered a little slyly at the demure and sanctified-looking Watkins, “it would be a bad job for some folks if they were, seeing as how they are loaded with so heavy a burthen of their own.”

“But I say, neighbour,” cried Watkins, eagerly returning to the subject, for the purpose of discussing which with him, he had alone sought out Stubbs....“I say, you must lately have seen something wrong in the house of the Captain, as he is called, though why he should, since not receiving the king’s pay, I can’t tell?”

“No, not I,” replied Stubbs, without seeming to notice this last observation....“not I,” digging away; “what should I see wrong in it? have the rats eat through the walls?”

“The rats!....ha! ha!....No....yet, nevertheless, the prop, the main beam, the support of the building, is, I think, going fast; but thou dost not, perhaps,” observing the other suddenly suspend his labour, and regard him with a kind of vacant stare, “understand metaphorical language; I will, therefore, explain....Thou must know, then, that the Captain (I know I should not please thee if I styled him otherwise) has brought himself into such trouble, by trying to bring up his son as a gentleman, that I should not wonder if he soon went the way of all flesh,” and he pointed with his finger to the ground, “he frets, and takes on so....for which, verily, I should pity him, but that I think his pride merits chastisement; for what but

pride, his wishing to have his brats hold their heads, like himself, above the honest folks about them, could have made him think of sending his son to the University forsooth, knowing, as to be sure he must, he hand'nt a shilling, nor a chance of getting a shilling, to give him?"

"Has he asked you," demanded Stubbs, "to help him to pay for his being there?"

"Me! no truly, it would be strange if he had, being, as I am, of no kindred to him."

"Then since he has not, I see no right you have to trouble yourself about the matter, for I suppose you'll allow every one has a right to do what they please with their own?"

"Yea, truly, I grant it; but, notwithstanding a man may give an opinion about another."

"To be sure....to be sure he may," cried Stubbs; "but, by goles, he had sometimes better not."

"Nay, verily this is the land of liberty," said the other waxing a little, very little, warm, for he was a peaceable man when in company, as was the case at present, with any one he was afraid of, "and a man may, therefore, say what he pleases."

"No, there you are out," cried Stubbs; he mayn't talk treason, let him like to do so never so much; and, I believe," looking significantly at Watkins, who was shrewdly suspected of Jacobinical principles, "I know some folks who would well enough."

"Pho, every fool knows that! But, as I was saying, it goes so heavily now with the Captain, that truly I should not wonder if he soon broke his heart, or," and he drew his hand across his throat..."you understand me....the unrighteous have ever a bad end."

"The unrighteous!....And who told you Captain Munro was an unrighteous man?"

"Why, hath he not been cast off by the father who begot him?"

"Yes, but there are unnatural fathers."

"But, I tell thee, old Squire Munro had reason to throw off his son, for he has wasted his substance in riotous living, and brought the grey hairs of his mother with sorrow to the grave."

"You tell me! but who told you? Amongst the things," continued Stubbs, suddenly sticking his spade into the earth, putting his arms akimbo, and advancing nearer to the other, "you have heard of men's eating, have you ever heard neighbour Watkins, of their eating their own words?"

"Why, verily no," cried the other, stepping a little backward, "I can't say neighbour Stubbs, that I have."

"Then I have," resumed Stubbs; "and, what is more, I have often made a man do so; and, what is more again, I haven't lost the knack yet by which I did so," and he nodded his head with meaning to him, and returned to his spade.

"I protest thou art a facetious man," cried Watkins, returning in a few minutes to the spot from which he had just made a retrograde motion.

"Not always....I am not facetious now," said the other in rather a surly tone.

"And why art thou not? I have not angered thy spirit, I hope....verily if I have, it was without intending, for I only meant to have a little harmless gossip with thee."

"I don't like gossip," in the same surly tone he had just spoken in; "'tis only fit for women and maudlin men; if you want any more, therefore, you had better go off to your wife, and I take it you'll have enough; and, hearkee, by the bye, tell her she had better not let that old turkey-cock of her's be ranging about at large, as he has done for some time past, scaring all the women and children.... there's not a girl in the parish can wear a bit of pink ribbon for him; and, as to my dame, she's mad as the duce, because she can't wear the red petticoat her daughter sent her a present of, for fear of him. Dang me if the old bully comes in my way, if I don't hit him a stounder shall make him look about him."

"That would not be right nor seemly....thy neighbour's land-mark," added Watkins in a nasal tone, "or thy neighbour's cattle thou should'st not touch."

"Why, as to touching his land-mark, by which I take it you mean his hedges and stakes, I should do no such thing, because to do so would be roguish, and, more-

over, might bring me into trouble ; but, as to giving any of his cattle a douse in the chops, if they affronted me, I should make no more bones of doing so, than I would to my neighbour himself, if he did the same."

" Yet it is a bad thing to smite a man ; the Lord delighteth to behold brethren dwelling together in unity, in that good peace and fellowship, which, I trust, neighbour Stubbs, will ever exist between us, for I like thee much ; thou art a man of a pleasant countenance, and thy discourse also is pleasant : why wilt not thou and thy spouse let me and my wife have more of thy company ? we do desire it much."

" I have something else to do than to company keep ; and, as to my dame, why, havn't I told you already of that old blackguard sentinel of a turkey-cock you keep strutting before your door ; you don't suppose she wants to be gobbled up as Tom Thumb was ?

" Ha ! ha ! you maketh me of a cheerful spirit...truly I did not know, till now, the bird was so troublesome to the maidens ; if he doth not deport himself better for the future, I shall rebuke him."

" Rebuke him !....O Lord ! O Lord !" cried Stubbs, seized with an immoderate fit of laughter, and supporting himself with the spade ; " and so you did'nt know that, like yourself, he was running after the maidens ?"

" Fye, neighbour, fye ! I run after them ! no :....I can't deny but I like the damsels, but then it is....."

" Come, come, don't hurthen your poor soul with any more lies this day....if you never did worse than like a pretty girl, why no one could say bad of you except they lied."

" I know not that any one speaketh ill of me."

" No ! why then in time, perhaps, you'll be wiser."

" Neighbour," cried Watkins, " I like not dark sayings ; let me know who speaketh evil of me, that I may bring an action against them, and obtain damages."

" No, I'll never put it in anyone's power, if I can help it, to make a man suffer for telling the truth," replied Stubbs, with the utmost coolness.

" Truth !" vexedly repeated Watkins.

"Yes; and now we are upon the subject of truth, pray may I make just so bold as to ask you, who told you that Captain Munro was in trouble for having sent his son to the University?"

Watkins hesitated to reply.

"Oh, if you don't give me an answer for what you have said, I shan't believe a word of it."

Watkins still hesitated; but, at length, rather than have his veracity doubted, and himself perhaps brought into trouble for the supposed fabrication of a falsehood, proceeded to say it was his niece, who lived as servant at the Captain's.

"And pray how came she by her knowledge of his uneasiness?" asked Stubbs. "I take it, neither the Captain, nor any of his family, made her their confidant."

"No, to be sure not," Watkins replied, "but she had ears."

"Which she applied to the key-hole," resumed Stubbs, with quickness. "I wish to the Lord that Old Nick, who tempted her to do so, had nailed them to it!" this is the way in which so much mischief is done in the world, peaceable people set by the ears, and innocent characters destroyed; for what an eaves-dropper cannot hear they will make out, out of their own wicked heads, that they may have a story to tell. Shame, shame unto those who hearken unto them! they are, like the receiver of stolen goods, worse than the thief himself. You who pretend to be so good, and so pious, and so discreet, to encourage a young thing, like your niece, in such shameless doings! why you may just as well encourage her to give away his property, his meat, and his drink, and his coals, and his candles, as to pry into his secrets and betray them. By the Lord, if a wench belonging to me was to bring me such a tattle, I'd give her chops a boxing that should make them tingle for hours! I am John Bull....I was born on the other side of the Tweed....and I like to speak my mind."

"But how dost thou know I encouraged my niece to speak of her master?"

"How do I know! why, if you didn't, wouldn't you have stopped her mouth the moment she attempted to

open it about his affairs? but I know the reason you are so anxious to pry into his concerns; I know 'tis in hopes of discovering some ill, some evil of him, for you hate him....yes, I know your heart is full of spite and malice against him, and I know also for why. But you'll spit them forth in vain against him," and with violence Stubbs again drove his spade into the ground...." yes, in vain, I say, for the Lord will uphold the good against the machinations of the wicked; and Captain Munro is good; yes, he is a just man....he gives to every one their due; he speaks ill of no one; out of his little he giveth to the poor; he has brought up his children to fear God, to honour the king, and to love their neighbours....that is, I suppose," said the Farmer, a little hesitatingly, " such as he thinks deserving of their love; and what can any man do more? He, therefore, that wishes ill to such a man is a scoundrel; he who speaks ill of him is a liar, and a back-biter, and a slanderer. Go, go," he added, after a pause, occasioned by the fulness of his heart, indignantly waving his hand as he spoke...." go, go, I am quite ashamed of you, quite ashamed to find one, who, from his knowledge of holy writ, knows his duty to his neighbour so well, performs it so badly: 'tis such hypocritical fellows as you who bring religion and the holy word of God into disrepute; for the wicked would never scoff at piety, but that they too often see those who pretend to it following the ways of unrighteousness. Go, go, take yourself to task; and, instead of saying godly things, strive to do godly things, for words are but wind, but by our actions we must stand or fall....the angel of the Lord marks them all down upon a table, at which he will look at the last day."

Watkins attempted to say something; but the indignation with which Stubbs turned from him, soon made him close his lips, and take himself quickly and quietly off.

As soon as he was out of sight Stubbs ceased his digging, which he had recommenced with violence, and remained for some minutes in a thoughtful attitude leaning on his spade....the exclamation of...." Oh, 'tis a scurvy, scurvy world!" then burst from him, as drawing it out

of the earth, he threw it on his shoulder and proceeded home.

The confirmation he had received of Munro's unhappiness, as also the cause of that unhappiness, deeply affected him; for he was a father, a tender father himself, and judged of the anguish he must experience, at the idea of not being able to give his children the advantages he desired for them, by that which his own feelings as a parent convinced him he should have felt, if unable to have sent his family into the world properly qualified for their stations in it.... "But the worst of all," muttered he to himself between his closed teeth, as, but not as cheerily as usual, he pursued his way homewards, "is the thought of such a mean fellow as that Watkins, yet perhaps being able to hold his head above such a real gentleman, such a kind and worthy-hearted man as Captain Munro is. Dang me!" and he suddenly clenched his hand, "if any evil happens to the poor gentleman, and that scoundrel attempts to crow over him.... But evil will not happen unto him; the Lord hath promised he will not forsake those that put their trust in him, and I am sure Captain Munro does. He may seem to forsake them for a season, in order to try them; for trials are, 'tis said for the heart, like what the furnace is for gold, necessary to purify it; but he will turn his face again towards them, if they still continue to call upon him."

About this time there arrived in the neighbourhood a nobleman of the title of O'Sinister, who had an old, but magnificent seat in it, to which he came but seldom.... so seldom, that this was his first visit to it since Munro had settled at Heathwood.

A few evenings after the conversation just recounted, Farmer Stubbs called on Munro, just as he was sitting down to tea with the ladies; he was invited to take a cup, or some other refreshment, but declined either, saying he had only made bold to call on the Captain for a few brocoli plants, which he had promised to give him the day before. Munro recollected the promise, and took him into the garden the moment tea was over. They had not got many paces from the house when the farmer, suddenly stopping, seized Munro by a button of his coat, and, after looking earnestly in his face for an instant...

"Captain," said he, "the brocoli plants were but a fetch to get you from the ladies...I have something for your private ear."

"Well, my friend," returned Munro, "recovering from the surprise his so suddenly stopping and taking hold of him had caused, "I am all attention."

"You must know then," resumed the farmer, "that...od's rabbit it!" cried he, rubbing his hands, and looking with a discontented air, after pausing a few minutes; "od's rabbit it! I find, a'ter all, I must tell you a story I hate to think of."

"Then the sooner you get over it the better, my friend," said Munro...."so proceed,"

The farmer testified, by a nod, being of his opinion, and then proceeded to give the purport of his recent conversation with Watkins; which Munro did not bear without much emotion, though without making any comments on it...."For the life of me," proceeded Stubbs, "I could not drive from my mind the pain I felt at the thoughts of your being obliged, for I knew how unhappy it must make you, to take that fine youth, Mr. Osmond, from the University before his education was finished. I won't say what I wished and wished; because, in my mind, when a man can only wish, speaking of his good-nature is but like a vain boast. This morning as I was still brooding over what Farmer Watkins told me, I got a summons to attend my Lord O'Sinister, who, you know, is lately arrived in these parts....It was all along of his Lordship that father and I settled on this side the Tweed; but his Lordship being desirous of having his land cultivated here after our English fashion, never rested till he had got father and I (seeing as how we were reckoned as good agriculturists as any in the kingdom) to give up a farm we rented from him in Derbyshire for one here....But, as I was saying, I was summoned to him; and, after he had asked me a power of questions about this part and that part of his land, and so on, and made much of me, for though a lord, and a marvellous proud man, he can be very courteous; and the prouder a rich man is to his equals, why the more pleased a poor man is with his affability to himself....."

"No doubt, no doubt," cried Munro, finding the farmer paused, and looked as if he expected him to say something.

"Well, after my Lord, as I said, had made much of me," resumed the Farmer, "he began to question me about this here farm of yours, which you must know, perhaps you do already, once belonged to him, but was sold to a friend who wanted to be qualified for a company in the country militia, from whose hands, he being a sad spendthrift, it soon passed into others, and so on, till at length, all tattered and torn, as one may say, it came into your's. "Farmer, says he," "who owns Heathwood Farm? has it got into any thing of better hands than it was in when I was last here?"

"Has it! repeated I; so then I tells him how that it had, and all about what you did for it. "And who is this Captain or Mr. Munro, that you tell me is so clever in the management of land?" said he; so I also told him that, and, from thence, he began to ask me question after question concerning you. At first I was a little shyish or so of answering him, for I don't much like, nor never did, talking of other people's affairs; till, at length, pop it came into my head, all of a sudden, that, perhaps, as I had told him what a worthy gentleman, and what a good subject, and a good man altogether you were, he might, if I also told him how you were straightened a little bit or so in your circumstances, lend a hand to help you; and so, the thought had no sooner entered my brain, than out came every thing I knew, aye, and moreover, every thing I thought of you."

"Every thing!" involuntarily echoed Munro, scarcely knowing whether to be pleased or displeased.

"Aye, by goles!" cried the farmer; "when once I began to tell him how your father had used you, and what a different one you were yourself, I couldn't have stopped myself for the life of me. But, Captain, suddenly changing his tone of exultation into one of submission, "I hope you don't take amiss what I did; it was not for the sake of tattling; I have already said I spoke of your affairs, but merely in hopes of getting you a friend, be-

cause I had not the power of being such a one to you myself as I knew you wanted and deserved."

These words determined the feelings of Munro ; he eagerly grasped the hand of the farmer.... " My friend, my friend," he said, perhaps not as articulately as he had just before spoken, " I believe you ; and you are, therefore, entitled to my gratitude, be the result of your communication respecting me what it may. But I trust Lord O'Sinister could not imagine you were set on to speak of me...I confess it would hurt me if I thought he did, as at any time I would rather make a direct than an indirect application for a kindness."

" Bless you, he think a thing of the kind ; not he indeed ; it must have been clear enough to him, even if he had less sense than he has, that what I told him of you was all of a sudden thought."

" Well, did he make any observation upon it ?"

" You shall hear...." Farmer," says he, laying down a cup of coffee he was raising to his mouth, " you have affected me much, by what you have told me of your worthy friend, Captain Munro ; and I promise you," says he, " it shan't be my fault if he and I are not better acquainted ; for," says he, (and he laid his hand, which I do verily think to be as white as Mrs. Munro's, or Miss Elizabeth's, but which, to be sure is no marvel, seeing as how, in the course of his whole life, I do'nt suppose he ever did as much as brush a hat for himself ;) " for," says he, " my heart warms to a character of his kind....but how should it not, seeing as how it is so like my own ; yes, there is too great an analogy," yes, that was the word, " between his and mine, not to make me feel an interest for him"....a sympathy too I think he said, but indeed I won't be positive, for I did not entirely comprehend the meaning of all his words ; for though, as I have already said, I got a good education, I didn't go as far as the words that are of Roman and Grecian extraction, I think they call it, as they say all the hard ones are. " So," continued the farmer, " after thinking a little on the subject, I thought it would only be right and proper to come and let you know what passed between my Lord and me

concerning you, lest, if I did not, you might be taken at a nonplus by him."

"Certainly, my friend, it was right I should be acquainted with it; and I thank you for the consideration that induced you to make the disclosure, as also for the kind interest you take in my concerns."

"And you are not in the least angry with me?" asked Stubbs, with an anxious look and in a corresponding tone.

"Angry! how could you suppose it possible I could be angry with a person I look upon as a sincere friend? No, the motive with me is every thing....he of whose wishing to serve me I was assured, would be entitled to my gratitude, even though he mistook the way."

"Ah, yours is an honest, honest heart, Captain!" cried the farmer; "and I trust it will soon be a joyful one; however, I say nothing positive about my Lord; he may think, and he mayn't think more about what he said....he....in short what I would say is, that it is a bad thing to reckon one's chickens before they are hatched."

"I understand you, my friend; but don't fear that I shall draw disappointment upon myself, by being too sanguine in my hopes....the season for castle building is past."

"No, I don't fear your doing any thing that is foolish," replied the farmer, "which to be sure it is to place too great a dependance on the promise of any man, that is, of any great man I mean, as how they are all bits of courtiers in their hearts, I believe: but good night, Captain; if nothing comes of what is past, why you are only still as you were, and, if there does, why then we'll sing, Oh, be joyful, and drive old Care away."

The reflections to which his conference with the farmer gave rise prevented Munro from returning to the parlour on his leaving him. Wrapt in thought, musing on the consequences which might result from the farmer's communication respecting him to Lord O'Sinister, he continued, till roused from it by his wife and daughter joining him. A fear of awaking hopes there was no certainty of having realized, forbade his touching on the subject on which he and the farmer had been conversing. The garden in which they had joined him was the favo-

rite scene of all at the close of day....here they delighted, amidst the fragrance of exhaling plants and flowers, to watch the sun gradually fading from the summits of the mountains, the evening yielding the world to night; and to listen to the soft and expiring sounds, so well according with the fading scenery, and ever, in the country, the certain precursor of the weary labourer's hour of repose. Hither Elizabeth frequently brought her guitar and harp, from both of which she had been taught by her mother to draw the most exquisite tones, such as sensibility could not hear without emotion.

The kind of sylvan wildness which prevailed in the garden, was what rendered it so particularly pleasing to its owners; it was large, and encompassed with steep banks, completely overspread with shrubwood, and topped in many places with old thorns, hollies, and blackberry bushes; contiguous to the house it was laid out for flowers; the centre was devoted to vegetables; and at the extremity was an orchard, interspersed with hazel copses: a little rill here wildly meandered through the soil, till it came to a deep hollow beneath a jutting rock, into which it fell, forming a spacious pool of limpid water, planted round with ozers, in the soft but incessant rustling of which there is something of the melancholy sound of the *Æolian* harp; nor can this be wondered at, since the same invisible musician plays on both.

The next morning, while at breakfast, the following note was delivered to Munro:

To Robert Munro, Esq.

"SIR,

"It was but yesterday I had the pleasure of hearing I had a neighbour of your description; the moment I was apprized of the agreeable circumstance, I should have hastened to pay my compliments to you, but for a sudden attack of the gout, which prevents me

at present, quitting the house ; my confinement to it, however, I shall less regret than would otherwise be the case, if you will now and then favour me with your society. The pleasure of your company to dinner to-day, at five o'clock, will confer a particular obligation on,

“ Sir,

“ Your most obedient servant,

“ O'SINISTER.”

*Firgrove,
Friday Morning.*

It may readily be imagined Munro had no hesitation in accepting this polite invitation ; still, however, he confined to his own bosom the hopes it tended to confirm, lest, after all, they should be disappointed.

At the appointed hour he repaired to Firgrove, and was ushered into a sumptuous drawing-room, where he was presently joined by the Peer, in his morning gown and flannel shoes, for which undress illness was his apology. His Lordship appeared about fifty, and was, both in manners and appearance, the finished gentleman....to all the politeness of the old school uniting all the ease of the new one. His features, though somewhat injured by time, were still handsome ; and there was an animation and keenness in his countenance, which proved him still in possession of all the mental vigour of youth, and endowed with no small share of penetration ; he had literally indeed, as Shakespeare says, a hawk's eye, such as seemed calculated to dive into the very recesses of the heart.

His reception of Munro was truly flattering....they dined *tête-à-tête* ; and, during dinner, and for a short time after the attendants were withdrawn, the politics of the day, the liberal methods lately devised for the encouragement of agriculture, and other useful arts, were the topics they principally discussed. The conversation then, in consequence of a question or two from the Peer to Munro, relative to his connexions in Scotland, be-

came more particular and interesting ; till at length the former, but in the most delicate manner, hinted to his guest his perfect knowledge of the cruelty and injustice he had met with from his family, and his ardent wish or render him a service.

Notwithstanding Munro's expectation of something of this nature, his emotion was quite as great at the moment as if he had not entertained one of the kind.

" Good Heaven !" he involuntary and mentally exclaimed, " in how many unexpected ways does Providence interfere for man ! how little, when listening to the rough effusions of Farmer Stubbs's honest heart, did I imagine I should ever be indebted to him for a powerful friend !"

With all the warmth of gratitude he thanked the Peer for his proffered kindness ; and now, the ice being broke, his situation was freely and candidly discussed. The result of this discussion was, Lord O'Sinister's insisting that Mr. Osmond should in future be considered his care, continued at the university the usual time, and immediately to commence the study of divinity, for the purpose of qualifying himself for a living of considerable value in the gift of his Lordship, and the incumbent of which was at this time so far advanced in life, that it might reasonably be expected it would soon become vacant.

" And now, my worthy Sir," cried Lord O'Sinister, when this matter was settled, looking at Munro, with a countenance beaming with the satisfaction of a well pleased mind, " how can I serve you ?"

" Oh, my Lord, in serving my son you serve me," replied the greatly agitated Munro.

" Well, well, that may be," returned the Peer, smilingly, " but I never approved of parents being dependent on their children, new connections but too frequently causing old one's to be neglected ; not, I confess, with impunity, but the hour of remorse often arrives too late ; so tell me what kind of situation you would like, for I cannot think your present laborious one of a farmer, so ill according with your former habits, can be pleasing to you."

"It certainly neither is or ever was, my Lord, but necessity is an arbitrary power, at whose shrine inclination is often obliged to be immolated."

"What say you to returning to your former profession?"

Munro started, and remained silent for a few minutes.... "My Lord," he then said, "I will be very candid with you; I should be very unwilling to enter into a situation that would be liable to separate me from my family, as a military one certainly would, or else oblige me to expose them to difficulties and dangers they are not accustomed to."

"You entirely mistook my meaning," cried Lord O'Sinister with quickness, "if you thought I had an idea of offering any thing to your acceptance that would reduce you to the alternative of either leaving your family, or else introducing them into scenes of danger.... what I meant was, merely to know whether, if a military appointment that would not render you liable to be ordered abroad could be procured for you, you would have any objection to accept it.... for instance, an adjutancy of militia?"

"The thing, of all others, I should like replied Munro eagerly, and with a flush of joy upon his cheek.

"I am truly happy to hear you say so," returned his Lordship, "since I have one at my disposal, which, from this moment, I consider yours."

"My Lord, I cannot, cannot," said Munro falteringly, and with his hand spread upon his labouring breast, speak the sense I have of your kindness."

"Well, well," returned the Peer, with a still more expressive smile than he had before given him, "that it may not be oppressive, I'll point out a way by which you may make me some requital for it... you see Mr. Munro, I am what is called a plain spoken man, but I love to come to the point at once, since I think there cannot be a greater proof of folly than to waste minutes, "the fleeting minutes of too short a life," as the poet justly and emphatically styles them, which might be usefully employed, in unnecessary punctilios. If a man can render me a service, I like at once to ask him... will he? if I can do

him one, I should think myself undeserving of any gratitude for it, if I did not directly tell him so. The service you can render me is by repairing immediately to Ireland, in the northern parts of which kingdom I have a very considerable property, and endeavouring to conciliate the confidence of my dependants and tenants, and induce them to acquiesce quietly in the measures now pursuing by government for raising a militia there, and to which, either through ignorance, obstinacy, or the machinations of evil-minded persons, perhaps all together, they, like the majority of the common people, are averse, and trying to resist; should they continue to do so, some blame will probably attach to me, as, from the influence my property gives me in the county, and my being appointed to the command of the regiment there raising, and in which I now beg you to understand your adjutancy is, it will, perhaps, be supposed that if I exerted myself properly, the reverse would be the case. To let government imagine I was not anxious to forward their views, would be to do myself a serious, in all probability an irreparable injury; yet, notwithstanding my thorough conviction of this, I am, at this period, so situated, that without putting myself to the greatest inconvenience, I cannot go to Ireland; in consequence, I have, for some time past, been looking out for some friend, to whom I might safely entrust my interests in that quarter; but, till now (don't imagine I flatter,) did not meet with one to whom I thought I could: my wish is, that you should repair directly to Ireland, take possession of the mansion-house at Temora, and use every means in your power to gain, as I have already said, the good will of my people there, which obtained, all the rest will follow of course; for once obtain the regard and confidence of an Irishman, and you may almost persuade him to what you please. Will it be inconvenient to you to set off to-morrow?"

Munro hesitated to reply; there was, 'tis true, but one obstacle to his immediate departure, but that was insurmountable, being nothing less than a want of cash, that grand mover, now-a-days, both of animate and inanimate bodies; a want so painful to the feelings of a man of delicacy

cy to disclose, that poor Munro knew not how to confess it. From being compelled to do so he was saved by the quick-sighted Peer, who, with one half glance of his hawking eye, perceived his embarrassment, and instantly conjecturing the cause....“Come, come, my dear Mr. Munro,” said he, laying his hand, as he spoke, upon the arm of his again greatly agitated companion, and regarding him with the most smiling complacent countenance possible, “we must no longer consider ourselves as strangers to each other....I have already mentioned my being a blunt man; the truth therefore is, you at present require a little pecuniary assistance.”

“I cannot contradict your Lordship, but a few days will, I trust, suffice for the purpose of enabling me to raise a sufficient sum on my farm, to.....”

“Tut, tut!” interposed his Lordship impatiently, “I beg your pardon Mr. Munro for interrupting you, but, before you could mortgage an acre in such an out-of-the-way place as this, why the Irish militia might not only, I am persuaded, be embodied, but disembodied and embodied again; no, no, dispatch is the soul of business; you must, therefore, permit me to be your banker on this occasion....will five hundred pounds answer your present exigencies? speak candidly I entreat.”

“O more, more than answer, my Lord,” cried Munro eagerly.

“Nay, excuse me for thinking differently; in the first place, you must provide for your son’s prolonged stay at college; in the next, all that is requisite to prevent those you leave at home suffering any inconvenience during your absence; for, doubtless,” continued his Lordship, with increasing earnestness, “you have no idea of removing your family, till comfortably settled with the regiment; to do so before, indeed, would be highly improper: and, thirdly, though your journey to Ireland will not, or rather, I mean, need not, be a very expensive one, you will find a residence there just at this time rather so, as, to facilitate the accomplishment of the business you are going on, it will be necessary for you to entertain a good deal.”

"But such a loan, without any security, without specifying any time for the repayment of it," said Munro anxiously.

"Well, well, since so scrupulous, so over-delicate," replied Lord O'Sinister, still smiling, "you shall do both....yes, as Shylock says, you shall sign me a bond, in a merry mood, but not for a pound of flesh."

"But when, my Lord?" eagerly demanded Munro.

"Why now, or to-morrow, or when you return from Ireland, or....whenever you please; my steward here has always bonds and stamps of every description lying by him," answered the Peer, with seeming carelessness.

'Now, now then, my Lord, if you please,' cried Munro, who felt that he should breathe more freely that the obligations his Lordship had conferred on him would sit lighter on his heart when he had given an acknowledgment for the sum in question; 'pray let him be instructed to prepare a bond for my signature.'

'Well, since you are so very urgent....but really, Mr. Munro, this between friends,' pulling a bell, however, as he spoke, 'is quite unnecessary.'

On his summons being obeyed, he ordered the steward to be sent in: accordingly in a few minutes he made his appearance, and, having received the necessary instructions respecting the bond, returned with it by the time coffee was over, and, together with an inkstand, laid it before Munro for his signature.

Munro was stretching out his hand for a pen, when the steward suddenly exclaimed....'But, my Lord, you know two persons are required to witness the execution of a bond.'

'What a precise blockhead!' returned his Lordship, but without taking his eyes off a fine spaniel with which he was playing; 'have I not told you that that bond is a mere matter of form?'

'By no means, my Lord; I neither can myself, nor wish any other person to look upon it as such,' cried Munro. 'I therefore request another witness may be called.'

‘ Well, well, you shall be gratified,’ said his Lordship, again applying his hand to the bell.

‘ You write, John, I suppose?’ to the servant who answered it.

‘ No, my Lord, no,’ replied John, with evident reluctance, and an air of confusion.

‘ But, I presume, some of the other servants do,’ said his Lordship.

‘ I don’t know, indeed, my Lord, but I’ll ask as soon as they come in.’

‘ In! why where are they?’

‘ Gone to a wedding in the neighbourhood, my Lord.’

‘ A wedding! oh then, I must excuse them.’

‘ Especially, my Lord,’ observed the steward, ‘ as this business need not be delayed on their account, as there is young man now with me, who will answer for a witness, if your Lordship has no objection to admit him.’

‘ Oh, none in the world, since Mr. Munro will have all the legal forms gone through.’

The steward accordingly withdrew for his visitor, with whom presently returning, the bond was legally executed, and delivered to Lord O’Sinister.

‘ Upon my honour (with a laugh) this is a good thing,’ cried he, as he folded up the paper; ‘ here I have got your bond, for a sum you have not received;’ he rose as he spoke, and, going to an escritoire in a corner of the room, drew out a drawer. ‘ I don’t think, Mr. Munro,’ pausing here, his back rather turned towards him.... ‘ that you looked over this bond?’ putting it up, however, at the same moment.

‘ No, my Lord, I did not think it necessary to do so.’

‘ No, certainly not, Jenkins is excessively exact in all matters of this nature; I have glanced over it, and find he has strictly adhered to his instructions, rendering it payable in the course of five years, by instalments of a hundred a-year, of which said instalments (in a good-natured tone) you and I will speak hereafter. In the mean while I must tell you, that I shall expect you’ll keep a regular account of your disbursements at Temora, that I may settle with you concerning them, as whatever you

expend there I shall consider laid out on my account.' Then locking up the *escritoire*, and returning to the table, 'I believe,' laying some bank-notes before him, 'you'll find these right.'

'Perfectly, perfectly, my Lord,' in an agitated tone replied Munro, as he crushed them in his hand, and put them into his waistcoat pocket.

CHAP. III.

'How abandoned is that heart which bulges the tear of innocence, and is the cause the fatal cause, of overwhelming the spotless soul, and plunging the yet unstained mind into a sea of sorrow and repentance. Though born to protect the fair, does not man act the part of a demon.... first alluring by his temptations, and then triumphing in his victory: when villainy gets the ascendancy, it seldom leaves the wretch till it has thoroughly polluted him.'

STEARNS'S LETTERS.

LORD O'Sinister resumed his seat and the conversation, which the entrance of the steward had interrupted: this principally treated of the neighbourhood and beauties of Temora, which his Lordship represented as a very fine seat, and contiguous to the sea; so that Munro, on landing at Donaghadee, would have but a short journey to it. After a short interval of silence, he suddenly enquired whether Munro had many children? On receiving his reply.... 'Aye, true, true,' said he, 'I now recollect Farmer Stubbs told me you had but a son and daughter.... Is the young lady younger than her brother?'

Munro bowed.

'And a fine girl, I make no doubt; well, I hope, Mr. Munro, you won't dislike the idea of having an Irishman for a son-in-law; for I think it very probable you will, as the Irish are, I assure you, quite as capable of forming disinterested, as fervent attachments.'

'I know they are, my Lord; and, as none can admire the warmth of soul and generosity that character-

ises them more than I do, so, of course, I should be happy at a connexion with them : the worth of the man who may wish to blend his fate with my daughter's, and not his country, is what I shall look to.'

The Peer testified the warmest approbation of his sentiments, and then proceeded to express the regret he felt at the little probability there was of his being able, at this period owing to illness, and the affairs which had brought him into Scotland, to pay his compliments to Mrs. Munro and her fair daughter.... "Should I not, however," he continued, "'tis some consolation to think, that next summer I may hope for the honour of an introduction to them, as I then purpose bringing Lady O'Sinister and Miss Athelstone, my daughter, here, and so on to Ireland; in the meanwhile you'll oblige me much by presenting my compliments to them, and informing them it is my earnest request that they would make the same use of the gardens here as if they were their own.'

Munro made a suitable reply to this obliging speech; and soon after, concluding his Lordship must, from the present state of his health, wish to retire early to repose, ~~arose~~ to take leave, but was compelled to resume his seat, nor suffered to depart till he had partaken of a collation with the Peer. He then quitted him, with a heart overflowing with gratitude.... a gratitude too great for words, but which caused him, as they parted, silently to pray that the dews of heaven might fall thick in blessings on him.

He had scarcely passed the outer gate, when he felt his arm suddenly seized behind. He turned round with quickness, and though the light was but faint, discerned the honest countenance of Farmer Stubbs.

'Captain, I beg pardon for stopping you,' he cried, 'but....but....' and his heart seemed so full he could scarcely speak.... 'I find,' pointing with his thumb over his shoulder towards Firgrove, 'you have been at the great house with the great man.'

'With the good man,' said Munro emphatically, and laying his hand upon his shoulder. 'Farmer,' added he, his heart dilated with unexpected happiness, and warmed by the generous juice of the grape, 'give me thy hand.'

‘Dang it, that I will, with a heart and a half,’ answered honest Stubbs, directly striking his hand into the extended one of Munro.

Munro pressed it between his.... ‘Farmer,’ said he, ‘may’st thou never stand so much in need of a friend as I did; but should’st thou....’ he paused for an instant, and elevated his fine eyes towards heaven, ‘may’st thou obtain just such a one as thou hast been the means of procuring me.’

‘Amen, amen!’ ejaculated Stubbs sobbingly; ‘and so my Lord O’Sinister.....well, well, he shall, from this time forth, be my white-headed boy.....but, Captain, don’t....don’t ye, I pray, go for to say as how you are so much obligated to me; it was myself I was obliging when trying to oblige you, for I did feel so lumpish when I thought of your being forced to bring home that fine youth, Mr. Osmond, before.....but, but, we won’t look back to old grievances....ads dads, Captain, if joy made one as light here,’ pointing to his forehead, ‘as it does here,’ pointing to his heart, ‘some folks just now might well be mistaken for crazy.’

He then, owing, Munro could not avoid thinking, to an intuitive delicacy not always to be found in persons of a higher description, ran off, without asking a question as to what Lord O’Sinister had done.

Munro found his wife and daughter sitting up for him. The joyful tidings he had to reveal were soon made known, and their joy was unspeakable.

‘Oh what a worthy, what a charming man must Lord O’Sinister be!’ cried the gentle, yet warm-hearted Elizabeth; ‘what a noble use does he make of his riches, and the power Providence has invested him with of doing good!....if all great men were like him, there would not be so much misery in the world as there is.’

‘Certainly not,’ returned her father.

‘Yet,’ said Mrs. Munro, in visible emotion, and smiling tenderly on her husband, ‘the happiness he has conferred, in the present instance, is like human happiness in general, not without alloy.’

‘Alloy, my love!’ repeated Munro eagerly, grasping her hand, and looking earnestly in her still beautiful, still

interesting countenance ; for, like the rose, losing her bloom, Mrs. Munro did not lose all her attractions.

‘ Yes ; for does not what he has done for you oblige you to leave us ? ’

‘ But, my love, for so short a time only. ’

‘ Aye, but then you have the sea also to cross. ’

‘ The sea ! ’ repeated Munro with a laugh, ‘ a brook, my love, you mean ; why the passage between Port Patrick and Donaghadee is so short, that if the breeze be at all favourable, you may with ease, in the course of one day, breakfast at one, dine at the other, and be back time enough to sup at the first. ’

‘ Well, I’m glad to hear this, ’ said Mrs. Munro, hastily wiping away a tear which had gathered in her eye.... ‘ my fears have made me betray what a bad geographist I am. ’

Though Munro had never been more inclined to social chat, to domestic converse, than at this moment, he had too little time to make the necessary preparations for his departure, which was fixed for the ensuing morning, to remain long inactive.

He wrote a circumstantial account of all that had lately occurred to his son, congratulated him on the smiling prospects that were now opening to his view, and enclosed him a handsome remittance.

At an early hour the next day he commenced his journey. He drove from his own house, followed, till he was completely out of sight, by the fond and tearful looks of his wife and daughter, to Firgrove, for the purpose of receiving from the Peer some introductory letters to a few of the principal families in the neighbourhood of Temora.

Unsuspecting of deceit, unforeboding of evil, he began and continued his journey....a journey which though alone, his agreeable reflections, and the beautiful and romantic scenery it gave him an opportunity of beholding, in which the richness of summer was just at this period beginning to be blendid with the verdure of spring, prevented his thinking tedious. Many of the scenes he beheld in the course of it were familiar to his view, but they were such as required not novelty to ren-

der them charming ; and, from the interesting remembrances they awakened in his mind, were probably contemplated with greater pleasure by him than others he had previously been unacquainted with.

Within a few miles of Port Patrick the heavens suddenly lowered, and a dreadful storm of thunder, lightning, and rain ensued. Munro had soon selfish motives for regretting this change in the weather, being compelled to expose himself to its fury, in consequence of the failure of one of the wheels of the chaise. By the time he reached Port Patrick, he was completely wet through. He eagerly entered the first inn he came to, but had scarcely done so, when, to his great chagrin, he was informed, that, owing to a number of passengers having just landed from one of the packets, the house was so full, a temporary shelter was all he could obtain in it, and not even that, except in a room already crowded.

Accordingly he enquired for another inn, and was directed to one of a very humble description, close to the sea. On entering this, he found himself in a room, which, from the manner it was fitted up, answered, he saw, the various purposes of hall, parlour, and kitchen : contiguous to the fire some rough-looking men, habited as sailors, sat drinking ; and, at a little distance from them, an elderly woman whose immediate approach to him evinced her being mistress of the mansion, was busied in unpacking a basket of fish on a table.

Munro, after informing her of the accident he met with, begged to know whether she could accommodate him for the night ? On being answered in the affirmative, he desired to have a room to himself ; and was accordingly conducted up a few stairs to one, which instantly brought to his recollection the parlour splendors of that belonging to the inn described in the *Deserted Village*....like that, its wall was white-washed, its floor nicely sanded, its hearth with aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay, its chimney-piece ornamented with broken tea-cups wisely kept for shew, and its furniture consisting of a

'Varnish'd clock that tick'd behind the door,
A chest, contriv'd a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day.'

Munro stood too much in need of a fire to have any hesitation in requesting that the ornaments of the hearth might be displaced for one. He was immediately obeyed : soon after which, not having dined, he sat down to a dish of the fish he had seen his hostess unpacking, and one of potatoes, with which frugal fare, at least so an alderman would probably have called it, he was quite as well satisfied as if a feast that might have vied with a city one had been spread before him.

Dinner over, and left entirely to his own reflections, his spirits, for the first time since his departure from home, began to flag ; the melancholy howling of the wind round the house, the still more melancholy and monotonous noise of the waves breaking on the rocky shore beneath, the heavy and threatening clouds that scudded before the gale, and rapidly succeeded each other, kept the horizon still dark and gloomy, gradually affected him.

At length, as a means of dispelling the melancholy that had thus crept upon him, he was induced to tinkle the little bell that hung over his head, in order to enquire whether the landlord, of whom, while attending at dinner, the landlady had spoken, was yet come home, that if so, he might have his company over a bowl of punch.

The landlady answered his summons, and, replying to his interrogatory relative to her husband in the affirmative, was desired to send him up ; accordingly, in a few minutes a tall thin elderly man, in the dress of an invalid, with a wooden leg, and a small cocked hat on, made his appearance, and literally marching up to the table at which Munro was seated, suddenly stopped before him, and, having saluted him by putting his hand to his hat, desired orders.

'That you should sit down,' returned Munro, laughing at the appearance of originality he betrayed, 'and partake of this bowl of punch, which I assure you does credit to your wife.'

'Sir, you are my commanding officer at present,' the other replied, with a flourish of his hand, 'and shall therefore be obeyed.' Then taking off his hat he hung it on a peg, and took a chair at the table. 'Yes, yes,' he continued, alluding to what Munro had just said of his wife, 'like the rest of her sex, she knows how to mingle contradictions; for punch, Sir, one may say, is made up of contradictions, seeing as how the ingredients of which it is composed are all of a contrary nature.'

'True,' cried Munro, 'and it therefore proves, that, by skilful management, things opposite and contradictory in themselves may yet be so blended as to be rendered agreeable.'

There are certain signs by which soldiers and freemasons discover one another, be their habiliments what they may; the host, therefore, had not been many minutes in company with Munro ere he was persuaded he was conversing with a military man; to put the matter, however, out of doubt, he enquired, and seemed highly pleased to find he was not mistaken, never feeling so happy, he said, as when in the society of a person, who, like himself, had been of the honourable profession of arms....the result of this discovery was a long account of the service he had seen, and which, if he was to be believed, had been of the most perilous nature, for still his stories ran

'Of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field,
Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,
Of being taken by the insolent foe.'

To all of which Munro lent quite as patient, though not, perhaps, quite as delighted an ear, as Desdemona did to Othello's relation of the same: that this was not the case, however, he gave no indication; he knew human nature, and, consequently, that nothing more galled a man than inattention to a narrative of which he has made himself the hero: but, though he neither interrupted, nor discouraged his host from proceeding, he scrupled not to avail himself of a pause in his conversation to try and give a turn to it, by enquiring how he liked his neighbours on the opposite side of the water?

'Like them!' repeated the other; 'by St. Patrick, their own dear saint, I like them much, for they spend their money like princes, and, as the old song says, on friend or on foe never turn their backs.....'

'Are they beginning to be better reconciled than they were to the new military establishment forming amongst them?'

'I cannot say; but if not already, in time I dare say they will, that is, if properly managed, by which I mean, if mild measures are pursued with them; for, like the man in the fable, about whom there was a wager between the sun and the wind, blustering measures will never do with them; convince their reason, give in a little to their humour, and you may, I am certain, do almost any thing with them.'

'Knowing this, and how ungenerous in any one to attempt having recourse to harsh ones.'

'Yes, and as unpolitic as ungenerous; since, like the willow, they will readily bend if they conceive themselves well treated, but like the sturdy oak, sooner suffer themselves to be torn by the violence of the storm from their native soil, than yield to it if they imagine otherwise.'

'You speak well, landlord,' observed Munro; 'from your language I conjecture the study of arms has not been your only one.'

'Why no, master, no; I had good parents, who gave me good learning, and once I was quite a book-worm; but just as they were on the point of binding me to a good trade, I took it into my head to be a soldier, in spite of all they could say or do to prevent me, for I was their only child, and they thought much....a great deal perhaps too much of me....my poor mother in particular; but I paid for my, I can't help calling it, disobedience to her wishes, for had I staid at home quietly, as she wanted me, I probably,' glancing at his wooden leg, 'should have had no occasion for this; however, if I had no other cause of sorrow for not having done so, why I should think nothing of the matter; but, at times, when I think that perhaps my going to the wars shortened her days, why then,' laying his hand on his breast, 'I have such twitches here, that.....' but suddenly

brightening up....' there is no use, Captain, in ripping up old sores....if we do wrong, why all we can do is to repent as fast as we can, and so the matter is settled.'

He paused, but a deep sigh was all that Munro at the moment had the power of uttering, owing to his just then feeling something similar to the twitches he complained of.

'And so, Captain,' after a short interval of silence, resumed the landlord, 'you are now going, for the first time, amongst my opposite neighbours?'

Munro nodded.

'Well, if ever we should chance to stumble upon one another again, I dare say I shall have the pleasure of hearing you say you like them much.'

'I make no doubt you will....but do you ever pay them a visit?'

'O yes, master, often; sometimes on one account, sometimes on another....I am glad enough, whenever I have occasion to do so, they are such jolly souls, than which there is nothing I like more, although I am not quite as young as I was twenty years ago; and, moreover,' laughing heartily as he spoke, and laying hold of his wooden leg, 'have, with truth it may be said, one leg already in the grave.'

Munro assured him if he came into the neighbourhood of Temora, he should be happy to see him; and, after eating a crust of bread, and drinking again to the health of one another in a tankard of ale, they separated for the night.

The heavens the ensuing morning wore a different aspect to what they had done the preceding night; the sun shone forth in all his summer brightness, the glittering waves seemed thronging and rolling from afar to behold his awful beauty, the clearness of the atmosphere permitted the wavy outline of the green hills of Erin to be distinctly seen, and the shore resounded with the noise of passengers and mariners, whilst the packet in which Munro was to embark appeared to be dancing on the trembling waters, as if impatient to pursue its destined course....emblem of youth! still anxious to rush forward into life, reckless of storms, unapprehensive of danger!

‘ Oh, life !’ cried Munro to himself, as he stood upon the deck of the receding vessel, his eyes still turned towards the shore, where fancy at the moment had conjured up the images of his wife and daughter, pursuing, with looks of love and wishes for his quick return, his trackless course through the waters of the deep.... ‘ Oh, life,’ as he compared his present prospects with his late ones, as he reflected on the sudden manner in which they had been changed, ‘ how chequered is thy path, how rapid thy vicissitudes ! to-day we sink beneath the storm, to-morrow we bask in the sunshine...this hour beholds us chilled with apprehension, the next warmed and enlivened by hope and confidence....what an argument against despair ! what an equally powerful one against presumption !....for, as the drooping flower may in an instant be revived, so may the proudest edifice be levelled to the dust.’

Having now done all that is immediately requisite for Munro, by giving him a smooth sea, a propitious breeze, and agreeable company in the packet, we shall bid him adieu for the present, and return to Heathwood.

This separation, the first that promised to be of any length which had taken place between Munro and his wife since their marriage, was most acutely felt by the latter ; the regret, and consequent dejection, however, it occasioned her, would probably soon have worn away, but that she relished not the situation into which he was entering, since one, from what she had heard of it, likely, she conceived, to engross those hours hitherto devoted to domestic happiness. On the subject of her dislike to it, however, she touched not to him ; tenderness for his feelings, as well as a conviction for the uselessness of the measure, since he had no other alternative, withheld her from giving utterance to it ; but in the hour of emotion and melancholy which succeeded his departure, she involuntarily mentioned it to her daughter.

Elizabeth immediately exerted herself to inspire her with more pleasing hopes of the future, and had, at length, the satisfaction of perceiving, that if she had not absolutely succeeded in doing this, she had at least in rendering her more cheerful.

The evening after the departure of Munro, as they were seated at tea near an open window, commanding an extensive view of the distant country, then glowing with the blush of evening, and round which a beautiful honeysuckle flaunted, diffusing fragrance through the room, they were somewhat surprised at beholding a gentleman, rather advanced in life, but of a strikingly dignified and fashionable air, approaching them through one of the winding walks in the shrubbery, and who, on reaching the window at which they sat, took off his hat, and respectfully bowing, entreated, in a voice pleasingly modulated, their pardon for the liberty he had taken in entering their garden to enquire his way to E——, a small romantically situated village a few miles from Heathwood.

Mrs. Munro politely assured him an apology on the subject was unnecessary ; and Elizabeth, who knew all the beaten tracks about the neighbourhood much better than she did, immediately gave him the required direction. He received it with gratitude, but also with a look so expressive of weariness, that Mrs. Munro, who was goodnature itself, invited him to enter and take a chair. With evident pleasure, and many thanks, he accepted this invitation. Elizabeth presented him with a cup of tea, and a general conversation soon took place, in the course of which, the stranger displayed much knowledge of the world and a highly cultivated mind, and spoke of himself as being lately returned from the continent, totally unacquainted in the neighbourhood, and now on a pleasurable tour through the kingdom... ‘Whenever, therefore,’ said he, ‘I come to any very agreeable place, such, for instance, as E——, I make it a point to stop there for a few days ; and, in order to let nothing escape my observation, since, if I cannot lay claim (and he smiled) to the title of a sentimental, I can at least to that of an inquisitive traveller, make my excursions about on foot, though frequently involved in awkward predicaments from doing so, such as often oblige me to put goodnature and politeness to the test, as you, ladies,’ again bowing and smiling, ‘have had a recent proof.’

Elizabeth, anxious for information, was minute in her enquiries relative to his travels on the continent. With the most obliging readiness he answered these, again, evidently to afford her gratification, going over the principal part of the classic ground of Italy, lingering amidst the enchanting beauties of Tivoli, prying into the craters of Mount Vesuvia, re-examining the magnificent mementoes of Rome's former greatness, and touching on the emotions awakened in his mind on his first entering that celebrated city, once so justly termed the mistress of the world....that theatre, where, as an elegant writer observes, human nature has been all that it ever can be, has performed every thing that it ever can perform, has displayed all the virtues, exhibited all the vices, brought forth the sublimest heroes and the most execrable monster, has been elevated to a Brutus, degraded to a Nero, and re-ascended to a Marcus Aurelius. On the wonders of Etna he also dwelt, its vast extent, its boundless prospects, its ice impervious to fire, its fire unextinguishable by ice, its eruptive mountains shaded with stately forests, the mountains caused by these eruptions, the fields of lava, taking ages to cool, the traces of the dreadful depredations committed by it, when raging, boiling with terrific fury it has poured into the very bosom of the sea, driving back the proud waves, as if to usurp their place.... 'Scenes of this nature,' he continued, 'from the mingled horror and magnificence which they present to the view, the astonishment, the sublime and affecting emotions they excite, are infinitely more successful in impressing the mind with reverence for, and devotion to; the Creator, than any the most elaborate treatises that were ever published for the purpose.'

'Assuredly,' assented Mrs. Munro, 'since 'tis through the medium of the senses the feelings are affected.'

In short the stranger so amused his fair auditors, that, on his rising to take leave, which was not till twilight grey had in its sober livery all things clad, neither were sorry to hear him ask permission to wait upon them again, for the purpose, he said, of repeating the acknowledgments their goodness to him had entitled them to.

Scarcely had he retired, ere a letter was delivered to Mrs. Munro from Lord O'Sinister, acquainting her of his Lordship's being on the point of setting off for London, owing to an unexpected, as also, since it prevented his having yet awhile the pleasure of introducing himself to her and her amiable daughter, unwelcome summons thither, on business of such importance, as compelled him to leave unfinished that which had brought him into Scotland; and entreating her, as he had previously done through the medium of her husband, to make the same use of the library and gardens of Firgrove as if they were her own.

This polite letter failed not to heighten the gratitude and esteem with which his Lordship had already impressed the susceptible minds of the mother and daughter, and both united in regretting not having an earlier opportunity than they now looked for of expressing the same in person to him.

The ensuing evening brought their new acquaintance, Mr. Eaton, for so he styled himself, again to Heathwood, and again he gave life and variety to the passing hours by his animated conversation. He now hinted a probability of his remaining some time longer in their neighbourhood, and entreated, should this be the case, permission from time to time to pay his respects to them; this Mrs. Munro had no hesitation in granting, his manners and appearance being altogether such as to preclude an idea to his prejudice; he seemed to be amiable, and Mrs. Munro was too great a novice in the ways of the world, too pure, too innocent herself, to doubt his being other than he appeared.

Accordingly, from this period, not a day passed in which he did not make his appearance at Heathwood; and each visit rendered the succeeding one still more welcome, so pleasing were his manners, so lively, so intelligent his conversation. At the expiration of a fortnight, as he was sitting alone one morning with Mrs. Munro, Elizabeth being engaged in writing to her Father, she, for the first time, noticed an appearance of thoughtfulness in his looks and manner....she smiled....

‘ Our retired neighbourhood is beginning to lose its charms in your eyes, I fancy, Mr. Eaton,’ said she.

‘ On the contrary,’ replied he, with quickness, ‘ every day renders me still more attached to it ; but it would be strange indeed if this were not the case, since never have any of my hours passed so delightfully as those spent here....ah, my dear Madam, not to weariness, but anxiety, is owing the depression you have just remarked ! I dread the disappointment of the wishes which the contemplation of loveliness and virtue has inspired me with. Oh, Madam !’ quitting his seat with an agitated air, and drawing nearer to Mrs. Munro, ‘ need I explain the nature of these wishes ? need I say they point to your lovely daughter ?’

‘ My daughter !’ repeated Mrs. Munro involuntarily, and with an expression of the greatest surprise on her countenance, as an idea of his having conceived, or being likely to conceive, a passion for her, had never, owing to the disparity of their ages, entered her head.

‘ Yes, your angelic, your fascinating daughter ! she has given birth to a passion to which language cannot do justice....a passion which, should she reject my suit, must entail misery on me, since to conquer it is not ; I am thoroughly persuaded, in my power.’

‘ Are you aware, Sir,’ asked Mrs. Munro, ‘ that my daughter has no fortune, neither any prospect of one ?’

‘ I never bestowed a thought on the subject, my dear Madam, for fortune is no object to me, my own being more than adequate to all my wants ; should I be so blest as to obtain your daughter, I shall, in obtaining her, acquire all I sigh for, the possession of consummate loveliness, a companion rich in all those intellectual endowments calculated to render her a delightful one, such as could not fail of giving her charms in the eyes of taste and refinement, even though her personal ones were infinitely inferior to what they are.’

‘ You honour her, Sir, by your favourable sentiments.’

‘ O Madam, I honour myself by entertaining such, since the homage we pay to worth and beauty reflects lustre on ourselves, by the evidence it affords of our taste

and judgment ; but (in accents apparently tremulous through emotion) do you, Madam, permit me to hope ?”

‘ It rests not with me to do so, Sir,’ answered Mrs. Munro ; ‘ I shall certainly acquaint my daughter with your proposal, but more I cannot promise.’

‘ What not your influence with her in my behalf ?’

‘ No, Sir, since, should that influence be requisite, she must be averse to the match ; and no parent, in my opinion, has a right to urge a child to a union contrary to their inclination, though certainly one to prevent their forming a connection they conceive imprudent.’

‘ But young ladies, that is, such very young ladies as your daughter,’ rejoined Mr. Eaton, with rather a disappointed look, ‘ are sometimes so apt to be romantic, that the interference of friends is often essential to their well-doing.’

‘ Perhaps so ; but (smiling) I flatter myself my daughter has profited too much by the precepts of the best of fathers, not at all times to let her reason have empire over her.’

‘ Well Madam, I will not importunate you to any measure you are averse to, neither at present longer intrude on you, aware as I am of my agitation being too great to allow of my being any thing like an agreeable companion. This evening, with your permission, I will return hither to learn Miss Munro’s decision respecting me....return literally to learn whether my future days are to be happy or miserable.’

Elizabeth’s surprise at the proposal of Mr. Eaton fully equalled that which it had occasioned her mother, since, like her, she had no idea, from the disparity of their ages, of any thing of the kind. On recovering in some degree from this surprise, she requested a day to deliberate on it, a request which her mother readily granted. The result of this deliberation was favourable to the enamoured swain....filial love did for him what he wished ; she saw her mother pining over the idea of quitting Heathwood, from her dislike to the bustle and unsettledness of a military life, as inimical in her opinion to the enjoyment of that domestic tranquillity she delighted in ; her father too, she made no doubt, from her knowledge

of his disposition, would have been better pleased to have obtained a situation less likely than his present one to interfere with the habits he had contracted from retirement. For the purpose, therefore, of procuring him this, and thus removing from the mind of her mother the uneasiness that preyed on it, she decided on accepting the addresses of Mr. Eaton; the fortune she was led to suppose him master of, and the liberality of sentiment and benevolence he appeared possessed of, inducing her to believe that he not only could, but would do all she wished for her family, provided she became his wife.

But that she would ever have consented to this but for the above consideration, admitted not a doubt; not that she disliked Mr. Eaton....on the contrary, she thought him extremely amiable, and, of course, admired him much....but that she conceived, from the difference of their ages, there could not exist that congeniality of feeling and sentiment between them which she had been taught to believe essential to domestic felicity; at least that refined and exquisite felicity which the heart of sensibility pants for, and which can only be derived from a similarity of taste and feeling. Still, however, though her lot as the wife of Mr. Eaton might not be the happiest, the high opinion she entertained of him permitted her not to fear its being absolutely the reverse; and even if it were, she was almost inclined to believe she could support it with cheerfulness, if the consequences she looked to from her union with him resulted from it.

Generosity and delicacy of feeling prevented her revealing to her mother her real motive for acceding to his wishes; Mrs. Munro, therefore, felt rather surprised at learning her determination on the subject, the inequality of their ages having inclined her to believe, that, as a suitor, he could not have proved agreeable. This surprise, however, vanished, when she came to reflect on the elegance of his manners and the cultivation of his mind, and that, though beyond the prime of life, he still, to all appearance at least, remained a stranger to any of the infirmities of age; her prepossession in his favour inducing her to believe Elizabeth would have as fair a chance of happiness with him as with any other person,

she rejoiced at her decision respecting him being such as she wished, more especially when she considered, that her union with him would exempt her from all future experience of the ills attendant on narrow circumstances, those ills of which she herself had had, alas ! such bitter knowledge.

The raptures of Mr. Eaton at the acceptance of his addresses were too great for description, and as the heart of the timid and shrinking Elizabeth did not by any means participate in them, she would have been better pleased had they been less violent : they were quickly damped, however, by her mother's positively refusing to let their marriage take place until her father's consent to it had been obtained.

'For, lest you should not be already aware of the circumstance,' she added, addressing Mr. Eaton, 'I now deem it necessary, Sir, to inform you that my daughter's promise to become your's is but a conditional one....except ratified by her father, it must be considered void.'

'Well, my dear Madam,' cried Mr. Eaton, with all his wonted animation, and gently seizing her hand as he spoke, 'if you are resolved on putting my patience to the test, have the goodness at least, to let the trial be as short as possible, by writing immediately to Mr. Munro.'

Such was her intention, Mrs. Munro assured him. The hopes in which Mr. Eaton was allowed to indulge did not, it may be concluded, render him a less constant visitor than usual at Heathwood....he now indeed almost lived there. To Mrs. Munro, in whose good opinion he daily gained ground, his company was always welcome ; but Elizabeth would gladly have dispensed with so much of it, as, since she had promised to become his, her mind became frequently oppressed by feelings that made her consider the solitude that afforded her an opportunity of endeavouring to argue herself out of them an indulgence ; the involuntary repugnance which she at moments felt to fulfil the promise she had plighted to him, she still tried to conquer, by reflecting on the happy change its realization would, in all probability, cause in the situation of her parents ; and that, with a partner

at once so enlightened and accomplished as he was, her days could scarcely pass otherwise than agreeably ; she did more, she accused herself of caprice for harbouring such a repugnance, since certainly she could not avoid acknowledging Mr. Eaton had done nothing to lessen the exalted opinion of his merits which had induced her to listen to his proposals.

From her mother she carefully concealed whatever had a tendency to give her uneasiness, and, by the uniform complacency of her manner to Mr. Eaton, evinced an almost equal regard for his tranquillity.

At the expected time a letter was received from her father, in reply to the one acquainting him with the overture of Mr. Eaton ; but, instead of sanctioning her acceptance of this, as expected, he positively forbade her (to the utter disappointment of her lover, as both his looks and words testified, as well as to the surprise of Mrs. Munro, her ignorance of the deceptions common amongst mankind occasioning her to wonder at others not placing the same faith and confidence in appearances that she did) from thinking more of Mr. Eaton, except he brought forward the most unquestionable proofs of his being really what he had represented himself.... ' For, though incapable of practising art myself,' observed Munro, ' I have not lived so long in the world without knowing that there are others not equally so ; and though revolting to my feelings to do any thing calculated to wound those of another, still, where the happiness of a child is at stake, such a child too as my Elizabeth, I cannot think of acting otherwise than with the greatest caution. Mr. Eaton must, therefore, relinquish all hope of obtaining her hand, except he proves himself, beyond a doubt, worthy of it.'

' I must confess,' said Mr. Eaton, who was present at the receipt of this letter, and to whom Mrs. Munro, after glancing over it, candidly communicated the contents, ' I must confess,' after a moody silence of some minutes, ' I did not look for a letter of this kind from Mr. Munro, the mind of candour being seldom the seat of distrust ; but, perhaps,' and suddenly ceasing to pace the room, which for some minutes he had done, evi-

dently through agitation, 'perhaps,' turning a look full of scrutiny upon Mrs. Munro, 'he may have grounds for suspicion; some invidious person in the neighbourhood may have misrepresented me to him.'

'No, I am convinced not,' replied Mrs. Munro; 'I am certain you have never been mentioned to him by any one but myself; and the terms in which I wrote of you were not calculated,' with a smile of sweetness she added, 'to excite suspicion.'

'Then, since he is so unjust as to harbour it without cause, I trust you will not permit it to have any weight with you: complete your goodness to me, convince me, beyond a doubt, that you really entertain the favourable sentiments for me you wish to make me believe, and thus entitle yourself to my lasting gratitude, by letting me no longer sigh for the treasure I am so anxious to obtain.'

'No, Sir,' replied Mrs. Munro, in a decided tone, and with a cold and repelling air; 'did I think I had a right, which, however, I by no means do, to act in opposition to the wishes of Mr. Munro with regard to his daughter, still would I be withheld from exercising that right, by the conviction I entertain of the superiority of his judgment to mine...what he does I have ever found to be wisest, virtuous, discreet, best; consequently, worlds should not tempt me to act contrary to his wishes.'

'What a happy man to have them so respected!' cried Mr. Eaton; but with rather a sarcastic smile; then, after another pause of some minutes, during which he again paced the room with agitated steps, and a countenance strongly expressive of anger, vexation, and resentment.... 'well, Madam, since Mr. Munro must have unquestionable proofs of my being worthy of entering his family, ere he admits me to that honour, may I hope that the testimony of your friend, Lord O'Sinister, in my favour will satisfy him?'

'Assuredly,' returned Mrs. Munro.

'Then I shall write immediately to a relation in London, who is not only intimately acquainted, but connected with his Lordship, and disclose my present situation.'

‘And I trust,’ rejoined Mrs. Munro, whose gentle nature made her feel hurt at his appearing to be so, ‘that a little reflection will prevent your remaining offended at Mr. Munro’s conduct on this occasion....be assured none can do greater justice to your merits than he will.’

‘When once convinced of them,’ added he with quickness, and again a sarcastic smile. ‘Well, my dear Madam, ere many days elapse, I trust he will be satisfied, that, if I have not qualities to entitle me to his admiration, I have at least to his esteem.’

Though Elizabeth was concerned that any thing had occurred to wound the feelings of Mr. Eaton, still she could not bring herself to feel concerned that something had occurred to delay their nuptials; neither that, from the day her father’s letter had arrived, his visits became not only shorter, but less frequent than usual, owing, both she and her mother naturally concluded, to some degree of pique.

As she and her mother were sitting together one day at work, about the time an answer was expected to the letter he had written to his friend in London....‘I wonder, mother,’ said she, suddenly withdrawing her eyes from the widow, whence for some minutes she appeared to have been earnestly regarding some object, ‘who that gentleman is.’

‘What gentleman, my dear?’ asked her mother raising her eyes from her work....‘do you mean the young man we have seen these few days loitering about the heath!’

Elizabeth bowed.

‘Oh, probably some one induced by the romantic beauties of the neighbourhood to stop a few days in it.’

‘It’s strange then that he should confine his rambles entirely to the heath.’

‘Well, perhaps he may be on a visit at one of the cottages.’

‘No, no, (with vivacity) I cannot believe that; his manners are quite too elegant to permit me to do so.’

‘His manners, my dear!’ repeated her mother....‘why how can you possibly know whether they are elegant or not?’

‘By having had a....a few minutes conversation with him,’ replied Elizabeth, stammering, blushing, and letting her eyes drop on her work.

‘A few minutes conversation with him!’ in accents indicative of the greatest surprise....‘and pray when had you an opportunity for this?’

‘This morning, at the old abbey, to which I walked before breakfast: as I was thoughtfully leaning against one of its broken arches, an approaching step made me suddenly turn round, and I beheld him making his way through one of the aisles; somewhat startled, I instantly hurried from the spot; he perceived my motion, and, hastening after me, entreated me, in accents well calculated to dispel it, to excuse the alarm he had given me.’

‘Well, and then I suppose left you?’ said Mrs. Munro, rather anxiously.

‘No,’ returned Elizabeth, but hesitatingly, and blushing a still deeper dye, ‘he....he....continued to walk on with me, conversing about the different places in the neighbourhood. On coming within sight of home, however, feeling that I should appear awkward if I suffered him to attend me to the door without asking him in, and convinced my doing so would not be pleasing to you, I stopped, and told him I must then bid him good bye, upon which he immediately took leave of me in the most respectful manner.’

‘You were right,’ said her mother, ‘in not suffering him to accompany you home, for, as your father says, young women cannot be too circumspect in their conduct.’

‘Certainly,’ assented Elizabeth; ‘he is one of those characters, however, I think, that would not encroach upon any civility.’

‘As far as I can judge, from the distant view I have had of him, he appears to be rather handsome,’ rejoined her mother.

‘Rather!’ repeated Elizabeth, but evidently involuntarily....‘he is excessively handsome; I never saw a more expressive countenance, or finer features....his eyes in particular..’

‘Cannot surpass Mr. Eaton’s, I am certain,’ interrupted Mrs. Munro with a laugh, but rather a forced one.

‘I beg your pardon, they do indeed ; Mr. Eaton’s are only indicative of penetration, whereas the stranger’s possess not only an equal degree of keenness, but all the brilliancy, the fire of youth, tempered by the most pleasing softness, the.....’

‘Upon my word, my dear,’ said her mother a little archly, and looking stedfastly at her, ‘’tis well he is not here, or he might be rendered vain by what you are saying.’

Elizabeth laughed, or rather affected to laugh, for these words, by making her recollect herself, occasioned her a degree of confusion which nearly overwhelmed her ; and was rendered still more painful, by a fear of its exciting unpleasant suspicions in the mind of her mother. To her great relief, the appearance of dinner gave a turn to the conversation.

Mr. Eaton had brought her some new publications in the morning, and, soon after the removal of the cloth, the mother and daughter, each taking up a book, seated themselves in different parts of the room. Mrs. Munro soon became completely absorbed by the one she had selected, but the thoughts of Elizabeth wandered, of course she could not fix her attention to the subject she was perusing ; she accordingly laid aside the book in a few minutes, and, softly quitting the room, repaired to the garden ; here, however, she had not long been, when the probability there was of her being shortly joined by Mr. Eaton, who had said he would come at an early hour to tea, and with whom she was at present by no means inclined to converse, made her hastily clamber up a steep ascent at the extremity of the garden, and cross over to Firgrove, amidst the embowering shades of which she delighted to ramble.

A double chain of verdant and gently swelling hills extended through the domain, thickly wooded and watered by a number of silvery rills, which, collecting towards the extremity of the chain into one mighty stream, fell headlong over a rocky steep, and, gradually expanding,

formed a spacious lake at some distance from the fall, round which the willow of the lover, and the myrtle of the poet clustered, and, with several other ornamental trees and shrubs, united in giving richness to its banks. On the opposite shore luxuriant pastures ascended, bespread with flocks and herds; and beyond these the trees again thickening, formed a seemingly boundless deep immensity of shade, here and there admitting partial views of the Gothic but magnificent mansion, and, farther on, of the ivy-mantled spires of the ruined abbey, whence the hoding owl, in strains of melancholy, still hailed the rising moon. On the summit of the cliff, down which the waters precipitated themselves, was situated a rustic temple, consisting of two apartments; the first commanding a view of the lake, and the richly diversified scenery that stretched beyond it; the other opening to the wild heights, that rose beetling in the rear, purple with heath, and in their deep indentures overgrown with hazels, hollies, and a variety of wild shrubs and plants. This rustic building, and the embowered walk over the hills, were favourite haunts of Elizabeth; their romantic beauties were congenial to her taste; and still more pleasing, if possible, to her was their solitude and silence, since allowing her to indulge, without interruption, those waking dreams of future happiness, so delicious to the youthful heart, because unacquainted with the fallaciousness of hope.

To this building she now bent her steps, but more through the force of habit than any settled intention of entering it; but she did not now, as heretofore, linger in her way, to catch the distant prospects, or inhale the scents of the flowers that perfumed the gale, and tufted the roots of the old trees that shadowed the path.

To the feelings, however, which occasioned this indifference to what was wont to charm her, she did not submit with impunity; she accused herself of weakness, of caprice, of ingratitude, for ever having experienced or yielded to such, for ever having given way to the discontent, the regrets which, for the few last hours, had pervaded her mind.... 'Yes,' she said to herself, 'I deserve to be punished for indulging (as she could no long-

er disguise to herself having done) reflections injurious to the generous man to whom I have promised to give my hand, for having suffered myself to draw invidious comparisons between him and a stranger, who may have nothing but personal accomplishments to recommend him: had any force, any influence been exerted to induce me to plight the promise I have given, my present feelings might perhaps in some degree be excusable, but, having voluntarily pledged it, nothing short of the conviction of the worth which led me to do so being but imaginary, could at all justify them. Oh, why is human nature so wayward! why, in the midst of the most smiling prospects, does the sighing heart still remind us of the imperfection of human happiness! but I will stifle these sighs of mine,' she continued, 'I will fly from the thoughts that gave them birth.'

Still, however, she continued to linger in her favourite haunt, though but too conscious its solitude, its silence, rather tended to promote than dispel the feelings she wished to overcome. The crimson glow of evening began to fade, its shadows deepened, and fainter, and less frequent grew the carol of the birds, but still she attempted not to retire, when suddenly she was roused from her pensive reverie by the sound of feet in the inner apartment, and, starting from the rustic couch on which she had thrown herself, she bent forward, and beheld the stranger advancing from the door opening to the heights.

The surprise, the confusion she betrayed at the moment, were sufficient to induce a belief of his having alarmed her, a belief which his looks and address applied his feeling.... 'I seem destined,' cried he, eagerly approaching her, and with a smile of mingled sweetness and animation to alarm you....but for the idea of having been now so unfortunate as to do so, how should I rejoice at this moment.'

These words did not tend to lessen the emotion of Elizabeth; she trembled, blushed still more deeply, said something that was not perfectly intelligible, and moved involuntarily towards the door.

The stranger followed.... 'Nay,' said he, 'I shall indeed begin to imagine myself an object calculated to inspire terror, if my appearance still causes you to fly.'

‘I....I....really, Sir,’ replied Elizabeth, making a vain effort to speak with composure, ‘was about quitting this at the instant you appeared.’

‘Well, Madam,’ but smiling a little reproachfully, as if doubtful of the truth of this assertion, and presenting his hand to assist her down the steps of the temple, ‘I will not have the temerity to oppose your departure, however I may regret its being so precipitate.’

‘Pray do not let me be the means of taking you hence,’ said Elizabeth, pausing on perceiving him appear as if he meant to accompany her.

‘I had no settled intention of remaining here [any time, I assure you, and shall, therefore, conceive myself not only honoured but obliged, by being permitted to attend you hence.’

Elizabeth, but with a fluttering heart, signified, by a bow, her compliance with this request, since to have refused it would have been, she conceived, to incur the imputation of distrust or prudery, neither of which she liked the thoughts of being accused of.

CHAP IV.

‘Why he can smile, and murder while he smiles,
And cry content to that which grieves his heart,
And wet his cheek with artificial tears,
And frame his face to all occasions.’

SHAKESPEARE.

THE animated remarks of her companion convinced Elizabeth he was a stranger to the agitation and embarrassment she felt at the moment. As they slowly proceeded, the tall trees beneath which they walked gently rustling in the breeze, and from the adjacent shades the droning beetle flitting across their path, he expatiated with rapture on the scenes by which they were surrounded, and the effect, particularly at such an

hour as the present, they were calculated to produce upon the mind, of the tranquillity they communicated to the feelings, and the consequent disposition they excite in the mind to receive tender impressions....“ Convinced of this,” added he, “ I would, had I an inexorable mistress (and he smiled a little archly, and looked more earnestly than he had before done at Elizabeth,) endeavour to allure her into such, more especially, as a writer, to whose opinions I subscribe, has declared, ‘ the lonely mountain, and the silent grove, encrease the susceptibility of the female bosom, inspire the mind with rapturous enthusiasm, and, sooner or later, draw aside and subjugate the heart.’

He paused ; but the reply Elizabeth perceived he expected, hesitated to make ; for, though in her heart she allowed the justness of the observation, she did not like to acknowledge so to him ; on his pressing, therefore, for her opinion on the subject, she rather evasively said, that to be able to form a just one on it, she conceived it requisite to have mixed in others.

‘ Pardon me for differing from you,’ returned he ; ‘ but surely one may easily conceive that the noise, the agitating pursuits, and dissipation of a Metropolis, are inimical to those feelings that soften and dispose the heart to love.

‘ Perhaps so,’ Elizabeth was about replying, when, to her inexpressible dismay, she heard the voice of Mr. Eaton. It instantly struck her, that, surprised at her absence, after having announced his intention of paying her an early visit, he had come in quest of her ; and that to find her with such a companion could scarcely fail of exciting the most injurious suspicions in his breast concerning her.

Terrified at the idea, she directly hastened from the path she was pursuing, nor paused till she had got to a considerable distance from it ; when, in much agitation, she motioned to the stranger, who, with astonishment in his looks, had followed her flying steps, to leave her.

‘ Good Heavens !’ he exclaimed, turning pale, ‘ have I then been so unfortunate as to offend you ?...so unfor-

fortunate as to inspire disgust and abhorrence where I wished to excite such very different sentiments?’

‘No, Sir, no,’ said Elizabeth, endeavouring, from her anxiety to dispel the strange ideas she conceived he might form of her conduct, to speak in a collected tone, ‘but I am now near home, and, therefore.....’

‘I understand you, Madam,’ slightly bowing, and in rather a reproachful tone, he cried, on finding she paused; ‘you deem me presumptuous, I see....could you look into my heart, you would acquit me of being so.’

‘You err in thinking such a thing,’ said Elizabeth involuntarily.

‘Indeed!’ exclaimed he with rapture, and a cheek suffused with its rich glow, ‘then why this impatience to banish me your presence?’

Elizabeth, with increased confusion, bent her eyes to the ground, and, unable to reply to this question, mechanically moved forward.

The stranger opposed her progress....‘Nay, be not displeased,’ cried he, observing her about speaking with an air of anger, ‘I mean not to act contrary to your wishes; but, at the same time, cannot prevail on myself to neglect making use of so favourable an opportunity as the present for revealing my own....for avowing the admiration, the passion with which you have inspired me. Yes, enchanting girl,’ suddenly seizing her hand, and pressing it to his throbbing heart, while with eyes beaming with love he sought her downcast ones, ‘you are the magnet that has detained me amongst these shades....I saw you by chance, but sudden and transient as was the view, your charms made an impression on my heart, which is, I am convinced, indelible; nor did I endeavour to subdue it, when, on enquiry, I found you were single, at liberty to (here it may be requisite to mention that neither Mr. Eaton’s visits nor overtures to Elizabeth were known in the neighbourhood) receive the addresses of a lover’....Elizabeth started at these words, and turning deadly pale, with difficulty prevented herself from repeating this last expression. ‘Had I obeyed the dictates of passion,’ he continued, in too much emotion at the moment to notice hers, ‘I should immediately

have tried to make my way to your feet, but unknown as I was to any one who could properly introduce me to you, I feared, by precipitancy, to incur the imputation of temerity, and therefore resisted those dictates. At the moment we met this evening, I was revolving the manner in which I could best introduce myself to you, whether by letter, or by watching for an opportunity of speaking to you....my wishes are, to be allowed to wait on you to-morrow, and to your friends reveal what my pretensions are to your favour....have I your permission,' and he looked anxiously in her face, 'to do so?'

Elizabeth could not immediately reply....never had she been so cruelly agitated, never as at this moment, when she saw that all that happiness which she had pictured to herself must be the result of the union of enamoured hearts and congenial minds might have been hers....' And ah, why, why was I so precipitate in engaging myself?' she inwardly and involuntarily exclaimed; 'why not allow myself greater time to investigate the nature of my feelings, and thus ascertain the effect likely to be produced on them, by beholding a being according in every respect with the ideas I had formed of perfection?.... But how vain, how improper these regrets! the die is cast, my faith is plighted, and both virtue and reason require that I should make every effort to reconcile myself to the fate that awaits me.'

'Your favourable sentiments, Sir,' she at length, but in faltering accents, said, 'are flattering, but ill should I deserve such, if I did not candidly inform you that.....'

'Oh, do not doom me to despair!' he passionately interrupted, and again seizing the hand which she had withdrawn, 'if so unfortunate as to have failed of exciting any thing like a similar prepossession in my favour, grant me at least opportunities for trying to recommend myself to you.'

'Impossible, impossible,' she was on the point of saying, when again the voice of Mr. Eaton, evidently descending the hill, reached her ear, and closed her lips: wresting her hand from the stranger, she darted forward, but had not got many yards, when, overtaking her, he caught her by the robe and stopped her.

'Will you then, by flying me in this manner, have the cruelty to let me imagine myself an object of abhorrence to you?' he cried.

'If...if you wish I should ever speak to you again,' said Elizabeth, confused and struggling to free herself, 'do not detain me now; should we meet again, I shall explain why I am so anxious now to go.'

'Should we ever meet again!' he repeated; 'I shall know no peace till we do, for you have conjured up fears that torture me.' Then relinquishing his hold.... 'I no longer oppose your departure, Madam,' he added; 'but remember, of all states suspense is the most painful; and be not therefore surprised if I seek for an opportunity of having mine quickly terminated.'

Elizabeth, without replying, hurried forward, nor again paused till she found herself at home. Meeting the servant in the hall, she asked concerning Mr. Eaton; and, finding he was not yet come, neither that her mother had made any enquiry about her, she repaired to her chamber, for the purpose of trying to regain composure, ere she made her appearance in the parlour.

Some time elapsed ere she succeeded in her efforts for this; nor did she quit her chamber till summoned to tea. She found Mr. Eaton in the parlour, and conversing in his usual manner with her mother; and from every circumstance felt convinced that he had not been to Firgrove on her account. Though never less inclined to conversation, or to receive the attentions of Mr. Eaton, she forced herself to join in one, and receive the other, with her usual complacency; so painful, however, were the efforts she was compelled to make for the purpose, that she could not help rejoicing when she saw him take up his hat to retire.

As soon as he was gone, she candidly, although not unhesitatingly, acquainted her mother with her second interview with the stranger, and all that had occurred in the course of it.

The communication occasioned Mrs. Munro not a little surprise, and would have caused her an equal degree of pain, had she at all suspected the feelings with which it was made; this, however, Elizabeth took such

care to prevent, that she had not the slightest idea of the stranger having made any impression on her heart. She highly approved her conduct towards him, and expressed a hope of her having shortly an opportunity of informing him of her engagement, should they find, which, however, from the discouraging manner in which his declaration had been received by her, she was rather inclined to think they should not, that he still lingered in the neighbourhood.

Elizabeth's self-reproaches were renewed on retiring to her chamber.... 'But I will atone for my error,' she cried, while tears fell from her, 'by henceforth flying from all that has a tendency to make me repeat it....yes, from this instant I will sedulously struggle against every feeling calculated to render me unworthy in my own eyes, or the eyes of those whose esteem I value.'

Spite, however, of this resolution, the thoughts of poor Elizabeth would stray beyond the limits she prescribed them, and fancy persisted in suggesting to her the happiness which, but for her hasty engagement to Mr. Eaton, might have been hers. The pangs which this suggestion occasioned were not lessened by any reflection on the possibility there was of the young stranger being other than his appearance proclaimed him; had such a one, however, occurred, it would not, in all probability, have been attended to, so prepossessing were his looks and manners....the former all animation and intelligence, the latter lively and insinuating.

To a figure of commanding height and fine proportion, characterised by an air of dignity and fashion, he united a countenance full of sweetness, sensibility, and candour; his smile proclaimed a heart of benevolence; his dark eyes a proud and noble spirit, calculated alike to awe and conciliate; in short his was

'A combination, and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man.'

Uninclined to rest, Elizabeth seated herself at an open window. In another frame of mind, and the scene without would have communicated the most delicious feel-

give her daughter an opportunity of informing him how she was situated, should he continue at all particular in his conduct to her.

He received this permission with sparkling eyes, and a glance at Elizabeth, which convinced her he augured favourably from the circumstance; she sighed at the idea, well knowing, that in proportion to the sanguineness of hope is the bitterness of disappointment.

As soon as the agitation of Mrs. Munro had somewhat subsided, she enquired to what was owing his having so fortunately discovered their danger? and, in reply, learnt, entirely to his being tempted to stay out beyond the usual hour by the fineness of the night.

At length he departed, but not without repeating his intention of waiting on them the next day.

Neither mother nor daughter could think of rest any more that night....the danger they had so narrowly escaped, the horror with which their minds were impressed, by the idea of having a secret enemy, totally precluded sleep; in vain they endeavoured to conjecture who this enemy could be....they could not recollect a being from whom they deserved aught but kindness and goodwill.... 'Let the consciousness of this, therefore, my dear mother, tranquillize your spirits,' said Elizabeth, at length making an effort to conquer her own agitation, for the purpose of endeavouring to calm her mother's: 'those who have nothing to reproach themselves with, may surely rely with confidence on the protection of Heaven.'

'No doubt,' returned her mother; 'it would however, I confess, be a satisfaction to me, to know exactly the quarter in which we have cause for apprehension.'

'If you accepted the services of the stranger, I think it probable you shortly would,' said Elizabeth, 'for he appears to be one of those characters whom neither trouble nor difficulty can deter from persevering in any cause they undertake.'

'He does; I shall, however rest satisfied with those of Mr. Eaton on this occasion, (Mrs. Munro always seemed to make it a point to mention this gentleman whenever the young stranger was spoken of)....Poor man, how greatly will he be affected when he hears the danger we were in!'

at the moment it was, it would have spread beyond the possibility of being subdued. How it could have originated where it did, was a matter of no less astonishment and conjecture than consternation to the family, it being perfectly well recollected by all, that not a person had been through the gallery that night with a light but Mrs. Munro; and beside, that had it been occasioned by a spark from her candle, it must have burst out long before it did, as there was nothing in the gallery in which it could have lain smothered for any time. The mystery, however, was at length solved, by a recently extinguished brand being discovered by the stranger close to a window near her chamber door, which, owing to the heat of the weather, had for some nights past been left open, and through which it was evident it had been flung.

The conviction imparted by this discovery, of having some secret enemy, agonized Mrs. Munro, who speedily recovered her senses, which the suffocating atmosphere of her chamber had deprived her of, at the moment she was endeavouring, in consequence of being roused by the shrieks of her daughter, to gain the door, beyond description.

‘Against an open foe,’ she cried, ‘one may be guarded, but against an ambushed one ’tis next to impossible..... Gracious Heaven! I sicken with apprehension at the idea of what may yet be attempted by a person capable of devising so diabolical a scheme! How dreadful the absence of Mr. Munro at such a juncture!’

‘Pardon me, my dear Madam,’ said the stranger, with much vivacity, ‘for saying, that, after the striking proof you have just received of being the immediate care of Providence, these fears ought not to be indulged; allow me also to add, that you will confer an obligation on me, by empowering me to make these enquiries relative to this affair, which Mr. Munro would doubtless deem necessary if here.’

This, however, was a request, which, after his avowal to her daughter, propriety forbade her to comply with; but the gratitude she owed him, as the preserver of her life, would not allow her to refuse seeing him the next morning, especially as it was her determination then to

give her daughter an opportunity of informing him how she was situated, should he continue at all particular in his conduct to her.

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‘Yes,’ replied Elizabeth; ‘but so must every one possessed of humanity.’

The next morning, just as they were dressing for breakfast, a letter directed, in an unknown hand, was brought from the post-office to Mrs. Munro. She desired Elizabeth to open it. Accordingly breaking the seal, she read aloud as follows:

—
MADAM,
The lines that now meet your eye are the dictates of a heart fervent in its devotion to virtue, zealous in the cause of innocence; let this assurance, therefore, induce you to pay attention to the warning they convey. One of the most artful, the most unprincipled of men, has found means of introducing himself to your notice, introducing himself for the diabolical purpose of ensnaring the innocence of your daughter: as you value the preservation of that innocence, as you wish to retain the applauding testimony of your own conscience, let not your door again be opened to the traitor...let not his pestilential breath again approach the flower, whose sweetness he would rifle; his licentious eye again gaze upon the cheek, whose virgin blush he would annihilate; his treacherous tongue again pour poison into the ear of purity. That his nefarious scheme may in every other instance, as in this, be disappointed, the domestic happiness he now aims to destroy, continuing unimpaired, is the sincere wish of one, who, in avowing himself the friend of innocence and virtue, avows himself the friend of Mrs. Munro and her lovely daughter.

‘Good Heavens!’ exclaimed Mrs. Munro, eagerly grasping the letter, ‘who could have imagined such a thing! Who could have thought him such a villain!’

‘Who, mother?’ tremblingly, and pale as death, asked Elizabeth.

‘The stranger...who else could you suppose?’

'Why, I think one cannot be certain that it alludes to him,' replied Elizabeth, but intremulous accents and with downcast eyes....'one may just as well imagine that it alludes to....to.....'

'Mr. Eaton, I suppose you would say....oh, my dear girl (in a reproachful tone,) how could you admit such an idea?'

'I should be sorry to do injustice to any one,' returned Elizabeth; 'but, in reality, Mr. Eaton is almost as great a stranger to us as him we style so.'

'But his age, his manners, his conversation, above all, the testimonial he has promised to produce from Lord O'Sinister, of being what he has represented himself, convince me he is not the person alluded to in this letter....no, no, 'tis the stranger I am certain; and we need give ourselves no further trouble about the affair of last night, since I have not a doubt of his being the incendiary.'

'And to what motive can you ascribe such wickedness?' asked Elizabeth.

'Entirely to his wishing to obtain an opportunity of doing something which should lead us to believe we owed him an obligation, in consequence of his despairing, from your manner, of otherwise receiving permission to visit here; but he shall find, from this being denied him, that he has no cause to triumph in his villainy....that if not absolutely detected, 'tis at least suspected.'

Elizabeth sighed....she could not deny that circumstances made against him: still however, the reflection that he might be innocent, and, if so, of the ingratitude he must accuse them of, on finding their door closed against him, without any reason for its being so assigned....the indignation with which, in that case, such conduct must inspire him, made her wish that her mother would not give way entirely to the supposition of his being guilty.

At length, by dint of supplication, she prevailed on her to let her not seeing him be excused by the plea of indisposition. Scarcely had she gained this point, when she saw him approaching the house; in a few minutes after, the servant entered the chamber with a card, on which were written the following lines with a pencil:

H

‘ THE disappointment of Captain Delacour, at not obtaining a personal opportunity of paying his respects to Mrs. and Miss Munro, is not a little aggravated by the cause of it ; but, though denied the pleasure of an immediate interview with them, he trusts he shall not be denied the pleasure of immediately employing himself in their service.’

To this address Mrs. Munro, after a little hesitation, returned the following answer :

‘ Mrs. and Miss Munro unite in requesting Capt. Delacour to accept their thanks for his politeness, which, however, they must positively decline putting to any further test.’

‘ Well, if any circumstance occurs to prove him the wretch, he is now suspected of being, never’ said Elizabeth with solemn earnestness, as she beheld him with an air of disappointment quitting the house, ‘ never, never’ her fancy still dwelling on the noble expression of his countenance, the candour, sweetness, and sensibility of which it was indicative, ‘ will I again place faith in appearances.’

Her mother acknowledged, that, to have judged of him from his looks, she should have considered him one of the most amiable of human beings ; but, notwithstanding their testimony in his favour, avowed her belief of his being one of the most worthless.

The conversation relative to him was interrupted by the unexpected arrival of Mr. Eaton, who seldom called of a morning. The occurrence of the preceding

night Mrs. Munro conceived she could not keep from his knowledge ; but with regard to the anonymous letter she resolved to be silent, lest the disclosure of, it should be the means of involving him in danger. He hearkened to the particulars she communicated with an agitated air, and a varying countenance ; and scarcely suffered her to conclude, ere he made an effort to depart, for the purpose, he said, of enquiring into the affair. This intention Mrs. Munro strongly opposed, but without saying why ; and, at length, prevailed on him to relinquish it. By degrees he became tranquillized ; and, as he recovered his tranquillity, grew extremely inquisitive about the young man (so Mrs. Munro styled Captain Delacour) who had been so instrumental to her preservation. His enquiries, however, relative to him remained unanswered ; and, but whether owing to this circumstance, or to any other secret cause of uneasiness, he suddenly became gloomy and abstracted, and abruptly departed ; not, however, without first signifying his intention of returning in the evening, and expressing a hope of then having the letter, he was now in daily expectation of receiving from his friend in London, to produce.

The mention of this letter, or rather the idea of the event she expected it to lead to, sickened the heart of Elizabeth. Pale, melancholy, desponding, she continued leaning against a window after the departure of Mr. Eaton, lost to external objects, till the trampling of horses roused her from her reverie ; when, raising her eyes, she beheld Captain Delacour riding across the heath, attended by a groom. It instantly occurred to her that he was quitting the neighbourhood, an idea which occasioned her a pang, that excited self-reproaches sufficiently severe to draw a flood of tears from her. To conceal these from observation, aware that if noticed they would lead to enquiries she could not answer, she fled to the garden ; but had not been long there, when the sound of a carriage stopping at the house made her hasten back through curiosity ; and, to her unutterable astonishment, the first object that met her eyes, on entering the hall, was her father.

We shall enter into no particulars, being totally irrelative to this story, of the manner in which Munro was occupied or situated in Ireland ; suffice it to say, that one evening, as he was indulging in a solitary ramble, for the purpose of meditating on the dear connexions at home, and anticipating the happiness they should all experience when again re-united, a gun was discharged at him through a hedge, near which he was walking, and he instantly fell. He felt he was wounded, but where, the universal shock his frame had received prevented him for a moment from ascertaining. He then perceived it was in his leg, and, sitting up, took out his handkerchief to bind round it. While thus employed, a hasty step made him raise his eyes, and he beheld a man, in appearance a ruffian, running towards him with a gun. On perceiving him, he no longer attributed the injury he had met with to accident, as at first he had been inclined to do ; and, under the persuasion of his life being threatened, made an effort, but an unsuccessful one, to rise.

Within a few paces of him the ruffian suddenly turned the gun, and with the but end of it aimed a blow at his head.... ' O villain ! ' exclaimed Munro, with a wild and flashing eye, throwing up his hands as he spoke to ward off the impending blow. It must however, have fallen, his position being too awkward a one to permit his parrying it effectually, but that, at the very moment it was descending, the gun was knocked out of the murderous hands that held it by the blow of a cudgel, and the villain instantly fled.

For a minute Munro lost the power of perception ; on regaining it, he beheld an elderly man bending over him, in whose features, at a second glance, he recognized those of his mutilated host of Port-Patrick.

' Good God,' he exclaimed, what does all this mean ?'

' It means,' replied the other, ' that you are the care, as indeed we are led to believe the good ever are, of Providence.... your life was attempted by a villain, and I arrived just in time to save it. Your honour may remember, that, as you were stepping into the boat, I told you, the first time I came to this side, I would make bold to call upon you ; I was in my way to do this, when

I stumbled upon you here....but come, Captain, let us hasten to the house for assistance ; with the aid of my arm, and this stout cudgel, don't you think you can make a shift to walk thither ?'

' To hobble, my friend,' replied Munro with a faint smile, as with his assistance he rose from the ground.

With difficulty they reached it. They found the hall door open, and Munro, turning into the first room he came to, rang for a servant.

His summons was answered by a man who lived at Temora in capacity of steward, a fellow of surly manners, and most unprepossessing countenance ; inasmuch, that Munro had conceived a strong prejudice against him, now not a little strengthened by the suspicions, which the terror and confusion he betrayed at seeing him excited, of his having had some hand in the recent affair ; the disclosure of these suspicions prudence, however, now forbade ; and, accordingly, till completely out of his power, Munro determined not to give a hint of them.

In pursuance of this resolution, therefore, he contented himself with merely desiring him to fetch a bottle of wine, and then go off in quest of a surgeon. Dermody obeyed, but not without having first made some awkward efforts, such as tended to strengthen Munro's suspicion of his guilt, to appear concerned for what had happened.

The moment he was out of sight....' Well,' said the honest veteran, or as we shall in future style him, Macleod, ' if ever I saw a villain, the fellow who has just left us is one. Captain, for Heaven's sake don't remain, another night in this house or neighbourhood, for my mind misgives me your life is not safe in either....the wherry in which I came over will be on its way back in the course of an hour ; so, in the name of God, return with me, and rely on it, my dame and I will do every thing that is necessary for you.'

Munro needed no importunity to induce him to comply with this entreaty, perfectly coinciding with Macleod, in thinking that where he then was he was not safe. He had no sooner decided on departing with him, than, as no time was to be lost in making preparations, he di-

rected him where to find his chamber, in order that he might collect his clothes, and pack them up for him.

Macleod was not long in dispatching this business; he returned with the portmanteau, and was then desired by Munro to unlock an escritoire in an adjoining closet, and bring him out the cash, amounting to two hundred pounds, which he had deposited there: to apply a key to this, however, Macleod found unnecessary, as it lay open, and completely cleared of its contents.

'Well,' said Munro, on learning the robbery, endeavouring to force a smile as he spoke, though distressed beyond expression by the loss of a sum so essential to the comfort of his family, 'it can't be helped, my friend; there is, therefore, no use in complaining about it; those who took it doubtless concluded, that, by this time, I should have had no further occasion for cash.'

'Ah the villains!' cried Macleod, 'only for the delay it would occasion, I'd search that ill-looking rascal, Dermody, when he comes back, for I'll be sworn he's concerned in this business.....but, Captain, have you no fire arms?'

'Luckily remembered,' returned Munro; 'in the hall my friend, you'll find a brace of pistols belonging to me, and loaded, that is, if no trick has been played with them.'

Macleod hastened for them, and, being examined, it was found that, unlike the escritoire, they still retained their contents. Dermody presently returned but unaccompanied by the surgeon, saying he could not find him at home.

'Well, it matters not,' said Munro, as, with the assistance of Macleod's stick, he quitted his seat; 'I am going where I hope it will not be so difficult to find one.'

'What, going away from this?' exclaimed Dermody, in an accent of surprise, and with a look at once scrutinizing, apprehensive, and ferocious.

'Yes; it is time for me to leave a place where my property has been taken, and my life attempted.'

'What....how....your property !....Lord, what has made you think so?'

With involuntary severity, and turning, as he spoke, his eyes full upon him....eyes which, like those of his

friend Lord O'Sinister, seemed formed to dive into the recesses of the soul....' You will probably soon know,' said Munro.

Dermody tried, but was unable, to support his gaze.

'Come, come,' cried Macleod impatiently, 'instead of standing like a fool there, twirling your hat upon your thumb, be so good, Master Dermody, as to throw this here portmanteau over your shoulder, and trot down with it to the beach.'

Dermody turned a look full of rage and scorn upon the old soldier ; the refusal, however, which evidently hovered on his lips, was prevented by Munro, in a calm but resolute tone, reiterating the command.

After a little hesitation, he sullenly obeyed, and still more sullenly submitted to going before, after having made several unsuccessful efforts to fall into the rear, awed in all probability, by the stern looks of Munro, and the threatening manner in which Macleod held the pistols.

In pain, both of body and mind, Munro embarked.... he was agonized to think, that, through the machinations of some secret foe, he might perhaps be compelled to relinquish the advantageous situation he had so recently obtained. By degrees, however, he strove to tranquillize his mind, by endeavouring to hope the best ; and after a little deliberation, finally resolved, notwithstanding Macleod's arguments to the contrary, on remaining silent with regard to the affair that had driven him from Ireland, until he had consulted his noble friend, Lord O'Sinister, respecting it.

The grief, the consternation, and resentment, which this truly good man would feel on being acquainted with it, he pictured to himself in the liveliest colours....' Yes,' said he mentally, 'he will feel as though the injury had been done to himself, and never rest, I am convinced, till he has made every exertion in his power to discover the perpetrators of it....how then,' he continued, after a transient pause, 'can I let my spirits flag, knowing, as I do, that I enjoy the patronage of so worthy and so great a man....one who, of his own accord, sought me out for the purpose of befriending me....Away tormenting fears and forebodings, whilst Lord O'Sinister continues my

friend, and continue so I am certain he will, except my own fault, I have no reason to give way to you !'

As soon as he landed a surgeon was summoned, and the ball which had lodged in his leg, extracted, but not without difficulty and danger, and the unpleasant information, of the wound in all probability requiring a length of time to heal, owing to so long a period having elapsed ere it was attended to, and the painful exertions made after receiving it.

Finding he was likely to remain an invalid for some time, Munro resolved on returning home immediately, notwithstanding Macleod's earnest solicitations for him to remain where he was, and his conviction of experiencing from him every attention he required ; but his heart fondly turned towards home, and, even though inclination had not impelled his return, prudence would, the again contracted state of his finances requiring that he should incur no extraordinary expence.

Accordingly, the day after his arrival at Port-Patrick, he was assisted into a chaise by his worthy host, and, accompanied by his best wishes for his speedy recovery, set out for Heathwood.

Gladly would he have concealed from his wife and daughter the circumstance to which his quick return was owing, being perfectly aware of the horror it was calculated to impress them with ; but, as to follow his wishes in this instance was impossible, he endeavoured to prevent the consequences he apprehended from its disclosure, by cautiously breaking it to them ; but, notwithstanding this, ere his narrative was closed, his wife became senseless in his arms, and Elizabeth, clinging round his neck, proved, by her fast-falling tears, that it was to these only she was indebted for not being reduced to a similar situation.

The attentions of her husband and daughter soon restored Mrs. Munro to animation. On reviving she fondly pressed the former to her heart, and... ' Never, never will we part again on this side the grave !' burst from her.

' While we were so safe, so happy,' cried Elizabeth.... ' oh my father !' and, dropping on her knees, she wrap-

ped her arms around him and her mother, and kissed and bathed with her tears their united hands.

The pain of his wound, which the motion of the carriage had not a little aggravated, soon obliged Munro to repair to his chamber. In his way to it, the mischief done by the fire caught his attention, and led to enquiries, which brought about, not only an immediate, but candid disclosure of all that had recently happened.

Distrustful of her own judgment, and, besides, so accustomed to repose unlimited confidence in him, that, even if she had thought, which however she by no means did, that the circumstances she now revealed could have been concealed from his knowledge, she would still have felt uneasy at their being so, Mrs. Munro suffered no interrogatory from him to remain unanswered.

Munro was greatly agitated by what he heard, but by no means concurred in opinion with her respecting Captain Delacour; he was convinced he was the young hero of whose exploits he had lately heard so much, and could not believe it possible that a character like his would plot the destruction of an innocent family.... 'His revealing his name is, to me, a proof of his innocence,' he added; 'since, if guilty, 'tis but natural to suppose he would carefully have avoided every circumstance likely to lead to his detection.'

'Then if you acquit him, on whom does your suspicion light?' asked Mrs. Munro.

'Not particularly on any one; our lives have been so inoffensive, the little power we possessed of doing good to others has ever been so eagerly made use of, that I am quite at a loss to conjecture how or where we have provoked enmity: when a little recovered, I shall certainly endeavour to discover; in the interim, all that can be done, is to be as much upon our guard as possible; and still to remember, that He, without whose permission a sparrow cannot fall to the ground, will continue to watch over the safety of the creatures that look up to him for protection.'

'You are of opinion then that the anonymous letter does not allude to Captain Delacour?'

'I am; but (half smiling,) pray where is this Mr. Eaton, of whom I have heard so much? when may I expect the honour of being introduced to him?'

‘Why, in the course of an hour or two, my love, I make no doubt, as he is a regular attendant at our tea-table ; if he knew of your arrival, I dare say his eagerness to pay his respects to you would bring him here sooner than usual.’ She then entered into a discussion of his merits, and concluded by a declaration of the happiness she experienced, at the idea of Elizabeth’s marriage with a man so every way calculated to render her happy.

A deep and involuntary sigh from the bosom of Elizabeth, at these words, caused her father to turn his eyes with quickness on her ; and awakened suspicions in his mind, which determined him to be minute in his enquiries, ere he permitted her marriage to take place with Mr. Eaton, even though that gentleman should prove himself worthy of her hand.

Contrary to the expectations of Mrs. Munro, the tea equipage made its appearance without being preceded by Mr. Eaton ; and, to her encreasing surprise, minute after minute, and hour after hour, rolled away without bringing him. Something very particular, she persuaded herself, must have occurred to keep him away, and, in consequence, resolved on sending, at an early hour the next morning, to enquire after him. Elizabeth made no comments on the failure of his usual visit, neither did her father, though he was not without his thoughts on the subject, being determined to give no utterance to the suspicions it awakened, except convinced beyond a doubt they were well founded.

The messenger dispatched the next morning by Mrs. Munro to the village where Mr. Eaton lodged, returned with information of his having set out for London the preceding evening, in consequence of an express acquainting him of the death of a near relation, to whose property he was heir, and to take possession of which his presence there was immediately requisite.

This story, though plausible, gained no credit with Munro ; he was convinced it was a fabrication, and, consequently, that an atrocious scheme had been carrying on against his daughter. Yes, he had no longer the smallest doubt upon his mind that a villain availing himself of his absence, had laid a regular plan to betray her :

this idea made him almost bless the hand that had reduced him to the necessity of returning home at this crisis, since instrumental, in all probability, to saving him from a wound nothing could have healed. For though of the purity of the 'angels that circle the throne of God rejoicing,' he had not a more exalted opinion than he had of that of his wife and daughter, he well knew they were too ignorant of the arts of the flagitious, to be any match for those of a hardened libertine. He could no longer think of concealing from his wife the opinion he had formed of Mr. Eaton; she heard it with astonishment, and, notwithstanding the deference she paid to his judgment, with something like incredulity: had Eaton been a young man, she might, nay probably would, have subscribed without hesitation to the justness of it; but his age was such an assurance to her of his feelings being divested of that impetuosity, which, in the early season of life, but too frequently occasions a lapse from virtue, that she could not immediately bring herself to believe him guilty.

'Trust me, my love,' said Munro, in reply to her observations on the subject, 'unbridled passions are not confined entirely to the bosom of youth....if in the morning of life we allow them to triumph, in the evening they will domineer....Ætna is not the only object in the creation that has snow upon its head, and a devastating fire within its veins: but, even though I should be convinced my conjectures respecting Mr. Eaton were erroneous, still, I confess, I should give our Elizabeth with reluctance to him, persuaded as I am, that without parity of age there cannot be that unity of sentiment so essential to the happiness of the married state, at least the happiness of a heart of sensibility like her's; besides, I am certain she already repents her engagement, and equally so, that she would never have thought of forming such a one but on our account.'

This assertion occasioned reflections in the mind of Mrs. Munro which gradually revived a train of circumstances in her recollection, that tended to convince her it was a just one, and consequently made her rejoice at the

marriage of her daughter with Mr. Eaton being prevented.

From the wretchedness which the fond parents were now equally certain the idea of this marriage caused her, they delayed not relieving their Elizabeth. To paint her transports at the moment, her joy, her gratitude, at being released from her promise to Mr. Eaton, at finding that the sacrifice of her happiness to theirs was what they neither expected, nor would consciously permit, would be impossible. An insupportable weight was immediately removed from her heart, by the removal of the chains which she had imposed upon herself; the melancholy which had begun to pervade her mind, and make her view every object through a gloomy medium, instantly vanished; again all around wore a smiling aspect, for again

' Hope, with eyes so fair,
Whisper'd promised pleasure,
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail.'

CHAP. V.

' What then remains, but, after past annoy,
To take the good vicissitude of joy,
To thank the gracious gods for what they give,
Possess our souls, and, while we live, to live ?'

DRYDEN.

THE whispers of Hope were, however, sometimes interrupted by the suggestions of fear: when Elizabeth reflected on the apparently abrupt manner in which Captain Delacour quitted Heathwood, she was not without apprehensions of its being owing to pique, and, consequently that he would make no effort for the renewal of their acquaintance.

Among those who came to enquire into the particulars of the affair which occasioned Munro's unexpected return home, was Jenkins, the steward at Firgrove, and

to him was entrusted the letter which Munro wrote to Lord O'Sinister relative to it. To this, in due time, an answer was received, expressive of the greatest horror and indignation at what had happened, and a determination to take immediate steps for the investigation of it.... 'And as I have no doubt,' his Lordship continued, 'of these steps proving successful, I shall hope and expect to hear, that, as soon as able to travel, you are again on your way to Temora, where, with real gratitude, I have learned your unceasing exertions to forward my wishes.' He then, after dwelling on the uneasiness he felt at the thoughts of what the family of Munro must have suffered from the attempt upon his life, mentioned having entered into a correspondence with Osmond, and being greatly pleased with his style and turn of thinking; and concluded, by saying he should feel himself highly obliged, by the ladies paying some little attention to a particular friend of his a widow lady of the name of Elford, who, in her way to the Highlands, for which she was on the point of quitting London, purposed resting a day or two at Firgrove.

From such a friend as Lord O'Sinister, it must have been a very disagreeable request indeed, which Munro or his family would have had any hesitation in complying with: accordingly, as soon as apprized of the arrival of Mrs. Elford, they hastened to pay their respects to her, and devoted the two days she passed in the neighbourhood almost entirely to her. They found her a pleasing, sensible woman, somewhat advanced in life, but still so lively and insinuating in her manners, that to converse with her without feeling prepossessed in her favour, was scarcely possible: in a word, she so ingratiated herself into their good graces, that, on her expressing a wish for the company of Elizabeth during her stay in the Highlands, no objection was made to the proposal, but by Elizabeth herself, and that only on account of the unwillingness she felt to leave her father at this juncture, who still continued lame: both he and her mother, however, were too anxious to promote her amusement to permit her to decline the invitation, especially when

assured her absence at the farthest would not exceed a fortnight.

At an early hour in the morning she quitted Heathwood with her new friend, and, towards the decline of day, reached the end of their journey, not a little gratified by the romantic scenery it gave her an opportunity of viewing.

In a narrow glen, open at one end to the sea, and winding away at the other like a meandering river, amidst rocks, woods, mountains, and falling streams, the picturesque interspersions of which brought to mind the rude but richly luxuriant wildness of Claude Lorrain's landscapes, stood the habitation of Mrs. Elford, for the purpose of disposing of which she averred this journey had been undertaken, a long, low, spacious, but somewhat ancient and dilapidated building, on such a spot as Ossian desired to repose in. 'O lay me, ye that see the light,' he said, 'near some rock of my hills: let the thick hazels be around, let the rustling oak be near, green be the place of my rest, and let the sound of the distant torrent be heard.' Every thing within proclaimed long desertion and decay; a few old servants composed the household, and melancholy itself could not have desired any thing more solitary or still.

In another frame of mind, and Elizabeth perhaps might not have liked an abode of this description; but now, owing to the impression which recent occurrences had made upon her, it suited her better than a livelier one would have done.

The domestics being apprized of the coming of their lady, dinner was provided against her arrival: scarcely was it over when she was summoned to a person on business in another room; she accordingly repaired thither, leaving Elizabeth to amuse herself as she pleased during her absence.

The evening was fine, and Elizabeth no sooner found herself alone, than her impatience to take a nearer survey of the romantic scenery which so delighted her eye, induced her to quit the house, and bend her steps towards the sea, from which it was distant but a short way. Here

the magnificent spectacle of the setting sun sinking to appearance amidst the glittering waves, and the glowing tints of the beetling cliffs that caught his parting rays, the haunts of innumerable wild-fowl, and richly tufted with marine weeds and plants, and dotted with self-implanted groves of elder, so that not unfrequently, by those who skirted the feet of these stupendous precipices, the sweet notes of the throstle and the rock-lark were heard mingling with, and at times predominating over, the harsh and discordant cries of the grey gulls and kittiwaks, alternately fixed her attention, and excited the most rapturous enthusiasm in her breast, such as the sublime of nature never fails of awaking in minds of sensibility : but, by degrees, this gave place to the feelings inspired by the reflection of being now in the immediate vicinity of her father's ancient neighbourhood....that residence which he had been so unjustly, and, she feared, for ever banished from; wondering, if by any chance she came in her grandfather's way, whether he would notice her, and recalling to recollection the manner in which, should such a circumstance occur, her father had desired her to act....namely, in such a way as should prove her having been brought up to respect the ties which connected them. She wandered on, almost unconsciously, till her progress was impeded by a projecting rock, against which the waves broke in white foam, as if enraged at the barrier it opposed to their innovations.

'And thus,' said Elizabeth, as, pausing and leaning against a jutting point of it, she saw wave succeeding wave and idly dispersing on the shore, 'does hope succeed hope in the human mind! scarce has one faded and become extinct, ere another rises, calming the perturbations of disappointment, and keeping aloof despair.... friend of the unhappy, soother of the afflicted, but for thee, how dark and dreary were often the path of life! supported by thee what difficulties cannot man endure, what sorrows not sustain! Oh, never may my bosom cease to lodge thee! for, as the poet elegantly says,

'Hope, like the glimmering taper's light,
Adorns and cheers the way,

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And still, as darker grows the night,
Emit a brighter ray.'

From her meditative attitude she was roused by a strain of wild, but exquisite melody ; she started, and looked toward the summit of the cliff, whence it seemed to proceed, but without perceiving any one....' Was it then an ideal sound I heard,' cried she to herself, after pausing some minutes in expectation of its being repeated, ' or one peculiar to these solitary regions, such as incline the unenlightened mind to superstition, and led our rude forefathers to believe, that spirits rode on the clouds, and sung on the winds of the rock ?'

She ceased, for again soft music floated on the air, and again, like the strain that had preceded it, gradually died away amidst the cavities of the cliff, like the last faint sighs of expiring nature.

Elizabeth, now looking about her more narrowly than she had before done, discovered one of these cavities, and immediately opposite to it a corresponding one, divided from it by a narrow path ; prompted by curiosity, she ventured within it, and, passing the intervening space, advanced through the other ; but scarcely had she issued from the farther outlet, when she started back, in confusion and dismay, at beholding a large party of gentlemen at dinner beneath the shelter of a cliff, a vessel at anchor near them, and, on a crag above them, the musicians whose wild melody had drawn her to the spot. Her confusion, at starting thus abruptly upon them, was not a little increased by their exclamations at seeing her, and still further augmented, by hearing herself pursued through the cavern....her being alone and unknown to any of the party, making her dread meeting with some impertinence. But, notwithstanding her speed, she was overtaken, and her flying steps arrested by the seizure of her gown ; panting and trembling, she turned to resent this insolence, but lost the power of utterance on beholding, instead of a presumptuous stranger, Captain Delacour. Her emotions at this unexpected meeting were such, as nearly to overpower her, and render his support necessary. For a minute she unconsciously rested against his shoulder, then, recovering to a sense

of her situation, broke with blushes from him, and moved forward. Delacour did not attempt to oppose her progress, on the contrary, he took her hand, and eagerly hurried her from the beach, up a winding path amidst the rocks, in consequence of knowing he was not the only person of the party who had followed her ; but on reaching a retired spot, at some distance from the place where his companions had lost sight of him, he gently resisted her efforts to proceed....‘ For a minute let me detain you,’ cried he, ‘ to express the happiness this unexpected meeting has given me, and enquire to what fortunate circumstance is owing the pleasure of finding you in this neighbourhood ?’

Elizabeth, in a voice trembling through agitation, a cheek flushed by emotion, informed him.

‘ How delightful !’ said he, in reply ; ‘ how amply does this moment compensate for the pain I endured at being compelled to leave Heathwood in the abrupt manner I did !’

‘ Compelled !’ Elizabeth repeated the expression to herself ; it was not then from pique or choice, but owing to necessity he had quitted it without seeking another interview with her....delightful idea ! her bosom swelled with rapture at it.

‘ The relation to whom I am on a visit here,’ continued Delacour, ‘ apprized of my being on my way, and impatient and uneasy at my stopping at Heathwood, sent me a summons which I could not avoid obeying ; my ill humour at the circumstance, however, was in some degree subdued, by the attention and pleasure with which she listened to my conversation about you and your mother, owing to her having formerly been intimately acquainted with your father. She is prepared to admire, to esteem, to love you,’ he added, with increasing animation, ‘ and will, I am convinced, eagerly embrace the opportunity now afforded of soliciting your acquaintance....to-morrow, with your permission, I will have the honour of introducing her to you.’

Elizabeth bowed....she should consider herself highly flattered by a visit from her, she said.

‘Then, this matter being arranged, I will no longer delay your return home,’ cried Delacour, passionately kissing her hand.

‘Nay,’ said Elizabeth, half pausing, and perhaps a little coquettishly, on finding he still continued by her side, ‘I shall think you sacrifice quite too much to complaisance, if you let me be the means of taking you from your party.’

‘And do you really,’ cried Delacour, a little reproachfully, and pursuing her half-averted eyes with his, ‘attribute to complaisance alone my wish to attend you home? No, no,’ smiling, and in an altered, and exulting tone, he added, rightly interpreting the soft confusion of her looks, ‘I perceive you do not do me such injustice.’

‘Well, well,’ said Elizabeth, endeavouring, under an air of unconcern, to hide the pleasure with which her bosom throbbed at the delightful idea of being regarded with more than indifference by him for whom the secret sigh of her soul was breathed, ‘let us speak no more on the subject....do you find this neighbourhood pleasant?’

‘Lately but tolerable, but now (bowing with a gallant air,) I shall find it delightful.’

‘Fewer compliments,’ said Elizabeth gaily, ‘or I shall be tempted to suspect your sincerity.’

‘Then, rather than excite a doubt of it in your mind, be my tongue mute, and my eyes the only herald of my heart.’

On reaching Mrs. Elford’s habitation....‘Must I then,’ said Delacour as he knocked at the door, ‘bid you farewell so soon?’

Elizabeth hesitated for a minute, then replied, she made no doubt Mrs. Elford would be happy to see him.

‘I have your permission then,’ returned he eagerly, ‘to attend you in?’

Elizabeth bowed, the door opened, and Delacour followed her into a parlour, where they found the tea-equipage prepared, but no Mrs. Elford....a circumstance, perhaps, neither much regretted.

‘Oh, how often,’ said Delacour, in accents of mingled tenderness and animation, as he seated himself beside her, ‘have I wished me thus....wished to be thus

situated....wished for such an opportunity of unclasping my heart to you....of giving utterance to its wishes, its hopes, its fears ; for where there is love, I now find, from experience, there will be apprehension.'

'Especially,' returned Elizabeth, a little archly, 'where there is diffidence.'

'True,' cried Delacour laughing ; 'and as I have notwithstanding what you may think to the contrary, more than a moderate share of that, except I receive some hope, some flattering assurance that I may.....'

The door opened and prevented his finishing the sentence ; both he and Elizabeth looked anxiously towards it, but, instead of seeing Mrs. Elford, as they expected, a servant entered, to say she found herself so indisposed after her journey, that she was unable to come down, and therefore requested Elizabeth's company to tea in her dressing-room.

'Ah, I now find,' said Delacour in a low voice, and with an air of chagrin, as he arose to depart, in consequence of this message, ' 'tis a true observation, happiness is of a fugitive nature ; but for present disappointment I shall endeavour to console myself by anticipation of to-morrow.' Then raising her hand to his lips for a moment, he made his parting bow and withdrew.

Elizabeth lingered at a window, whence she could trace his steps, till he had entirely receded from her view ; she then, with a heart throbbing with the most delightful sensations, hastened to the chamber of Mrs. Elford, but paused, through surprise, at the entrance, occasioned by finding her without the smallest appearance of indisposition.

'Why, what's the matter, my dear ?' asked Mrs. Elford laughing ; you look astonished.

'A little so, I confess, Madam,' replied Elizabeth, as she advanced into the room, 'but at the same time, agreeably so, I assure you, since, contrary to what I was led to expect, I perceive no symptoms of illness about you.'

'Oh, it's not my way, my dear, to yield to complaints : but come, take a seat, and let me know where you met

with that handsome young fellow that attended you home.'

The terms in which this inquiry was made excited a degree of surprise, it might be said of disgust, in the mind of Elizabeth, that took from her the power of immediately answering it.

Mrs. Elford again laughed, and enquired whether the surprise she manifested was owing to her having had the candour to confess she thought the gentleman handsome, or the bad taste to reckon him so ?.... 'If to the former,' added she, 'when you know me better, you'll cease to wonder at hearing me say what I think, as it has always been my way to do so.' She then repeated her question, and received a reply to it. This, however, did not satisfy her ; Elizabeth having accidentally mentioned her meeting with Delacour before, she rested not till she had learned when, where, and how, in short, every particular relative to their acquaintance.

'And so,' cried she, on obtaining the full gratification of her curiosity, 'you have given him permission to wait on you to-morrow ?'

'Yes, Madam,' answered Elizabeth, but in rather a hesitating manner owing to the air of dissatisfaction, at least so she fancied, with which these words were uttered ; 'but if you have the least objection to his being introduced to you, or my seeing him.....'

'Me !....Lord, child, not the least,' interrupted Mrs. Elford ; 'or, if I had, it would only be in consequence of the dubious light in which I think he appears : but a short time will, I hope, put it beyond a doubt, whether or not the anonymous letter alluded to him.'

'That has already been done, Madam,' said Elizabeth with involuntary warmth.

'Indeed ! well, my dear, I trust he will prove deserving of your good opinion....if, indeed, he has a relation in the neighbourhood, and introduces her to you, then, indeed, I shall think him entitled to your notice ; but.....'

'Till you are convinced he is,' interrupted Elizabeth, with a quickness which proved, beyond doubt, her being piqued by the suggestion of any thing to the prejudice

of Delacour, 'we will, Madam, if you please, cease to converse about him.'

Mrs. Elford nodded.... 'As you please my dear,' said she, and immediately changed the conversation.

Ill humour was a guest that could not long retain a place in such a bosom as Elizabeth's; she quickly, therefore, ceased to feel angry with Mrs. Elford, by reflecting, that what she had said concerning Delacour could alone be owing to anxiety for her welfare; but, notwithstanding this, could not help wishing to be alone, that she might have an uninterrupted opportunity of revolving all that had passed in her recent interview with him.

His looks, his words, his manner, all tended to confirm her in the delightful idea of being beloved by him, and his immediately meaning to make an overture for her hand. That her parents would have any hesitation in permitting her union with him, she could not imagine, and, of course, saw nothing at this moment but happiness before her.

At breakfast Mrs. Elford gave orders for the admission of Captain Delacour; and, on quitting the parlour to receive a person in treaty for her house, desired when he came she might be informed.

Elizabeth, on being left to herself, took up a book, but her ideas wandered too much to permit her to be amused with reading; and she at length laid it aside, to steal into the hall, for the purpose of looking at the clock. She found it on the stroke of twelve.... 'Well, Delacour will soon be here now,' thought she, as she softly re-entered the parlour.

She was mistaken, however.... hour after hour passed away without seeing him; and, at length, the announcement of dinner made her give up all hopes on seeing him that day. With a feeling of mortified pride Elizabeth joined Mrs. Elford, longing, yet almost fearing to hear what she would say relative to his not coming, for that she would comment upon the circumstance she made no doubt.

During dinner, however, not a word was said on the subject, but this Elizabeth imputed to the presence of

the servants ; Mrs. Elford, however, was equally silent after they withdrew ; and Elizabeth, impatient and vexed, was more than once on the point of introducing it herself, but for a fear of incurring the imputation of over-anxiety for his visit. At length, after a silence of a few minutes....‘ So, after all, no visitors here to-day,’ said Mrs. Elford, in a laughing manner.

‘ No,’ replied Elizabeth, with an eagerness which evinced her anxiety for Mrs. Elford’s opinion on the subject ; ‘ don’t you (hesitating a little) think ’tis rather strange, Madam ?’

‘ We have a long evening before us,’ returned Mrs. Elford ; ‘ Captain Delacour, therefore, may still be here.’

‘ True,’ cried Elizabeth, joyfully catching at these words ; ‘ I wonder it did not occur to me that he might.’

Mrs. Elford made no reply, and, a new subject being introduced, they continued to chat till after tea, when again she made business the pretext for leaving Elizabeth to herself.

Vexed, mortified, disappointed, for that Captain Delacour’s expected visit would not be paid this day, she was by this time pretty well convinced, and for the failure of which she knew not how to account in any satisfactory manner, Elizabeth no sooner found herself alone, than she strolled from the parlour into a wild kind of garden into which it opened, in order to be out of the way of observation, till she had in some degree subdued her present feelings : the reflections, however, which occupied her mind were not, by any means, calculated to enable her to conquer them. Lost in thought, she wandered on, till startled by a tap on the shoulder, when, turning, she beheld Mrs. Elford.

‘ Upon my word,’ laughing, and pressing her arm under her’s, ‘ the reverie of a philosopher could not have been more profound....may I enquire the subject of your meditations, or at least guess ?’

Elizabeth blushed and drooped her head, but too conscious that Mrs. Elford more than suspected the state of her heart.

‘ Come, come,’ added Mrs. Elford, ‘ he is not worth another thought.’

‘He!’ repeated Elizabeth with emphasis.

‘Why, I hope,’ smiling a little archly in her face, ‘you will not pretend to deny that you were thinking of Captain Delacour?’

‘Well, Madam,’ scarcely conscious of what she uttered, said Elizabeth.

‘Well, Madam,’ cried Mrs. Elford, mimicking her agitated tone; ‘why nothing more, my dear, than that I think it very natural for the thoughts of a young girl, like you, to be occupied by a handsome young man like him, but certainly no longer than while he treats her with proper respect and attention, in both of which he has been totally deficient to you.’

‘You think so?’ turning pale, and in a hesitating voice.

‘I do indeed, and hope you do the same, or you will be liable to meet again with rudeness from him: as he has led you to expect a visit, he certainly, to have acted consistently with politeness, and the respect due to you, should have given you early intimation of his being unable to pay it, that on his account you might not remain at home....but I suppose, from the ease with which he obtained permission to come here, he thinks he can soon make his peace with you.’

‘Do you then think, Madam,’ said Elizabeth, in the greatest agitation, at once alarmed and shocked by this speech, ‘that I should have refused him that permission?’

‘Why, to be sure, when I consider the obligations you think yourself under to him, I cannot wonder at the readiness with which you granted it....however, since you have asked the question, I candidly confess, I think it would have been better if you had not done so, for men seldom value what they easily obtain. Ah, they are sad creatures indeed; ardent only when they see difficulties, but careless when they perceive none; but let me not rail against them, for a perverseness that seems inherent in human nature, which, in all and every stage of life, is, in a greater or less degree, perceptible....the child quickly throws aside the toy it has easily obtained....the prize that may readily be won is reckoned scarce

worth contending for....and seldom does the bloodless victory gain the wreath of fame for the conqueror....'tis not the glittering of the diamond, nor the delicacy of the pearl, that renders them so valuable, 'tis the difficulty and danger with which they are procured....the female who would be prized must not unsought be won....she who knows not how to make herself scarce, will never be followed with that ardour so pleasing to the vanity, so flattering to the sensibility of her sex. There is an innocent coquetry, in which every woman should be an adept, that of knowing how to recede, so as to create anxiety, and appear so as to rouse attention ; in short, the woman who is politic will often disappoint her own wishes, for the purpose of stimulating those of others, since what we continually see we frequently cease to regard....But come (smiling, and tapping the varying cheek of Elizabeth,) I see you are vexed, so let us change the subject ; should Captain Delacour come, and make a proper apology for his conduct, let him be forgiven ; but, except he does.....'

' We'll speak no more of him, ' interrupted Elizabeth with warmth ; ' for to converse about a person merely to censure them, cannot, in my opinion, afford any gratification.'

Mrs. Elford assented to the justness of this remark by a smile, and immediately after purposed their quitting the garden for the sea-side : to this proposal Elizabeth making no objection, they were proceeding thither, when a servant appeared, to say a person had called, who wanted to see his mistress for a few minutes.

' Well, this need not, however, prevent your pursuing your walk,' cried she, addressing her companion, as she withdrew her arm from her ; ' for I shall hasten after you, and it would be a pity, after confining yourself the whole of the morning, if you did not avail yourself of so fine an evening to take one.'

In a frame of mind that rendered conversation at the moment painful to her, Elizabeth gladly consented to do as Mrs. Elford wished. On being left to herself, she sauntered on, vainly trying to find an excuse in her own mind for the conduct of Captain Delacour ; for, though

something might have occurred to prevent his paying his expected visit, she could not conceive that any thing could have occurred to prevent his sending to apologize for the failure of it. That his not coming, however, was owing to any slighting opinion he had conceived of her, she could not bring herself to imagine, since, solicited as she had been to receive his visit, she saw not how she could have refused him : but the pleasure of self-acquittal could not immediately overcome the pangs of offended pride and wounded sensibility....the feelings excited by his behaviour were aggravated by the mortifying conjectures to which she saw it had given rise in the mind of Mrs. Elford.

Absorbed in thought, she heeded not the length of time which had elapsed since her quitting home, nor the gloom that was beginning to involve surrounding objects, till startled by approaching steps, when raising her head, she beheld two men of mean appearance following her steps beneath the shadow of the cliffs ; concluding, however, that they were natives of the place, proceeding homeward after the labours of the day, the circumstance excited no alarm, till, on her turning to retrace her way to Mrs. Elford's, she saw them also turn ; fear instantly lent her wings, but, notwithstanding her speed, she was quickly overtaken by them, and, spite of her shrieks and struggles, borne with rapidity from the beach. Her senses forsook her at the moment, and, on regaining them, she found herself seated on horseback before one of the ruffians ; for a few minutes she felt wild and confused, as if awaking from a frightful dream ; then, coming entirely to herself, she looked around to see where she was, and found herself in a narrow dingle, hemmed in by rocks of immense height, and, as well as the ghastly light diffused around by the 'wan pale moon already risen in the east' would permit her to discern, savage aspect.

'Whither are you taking me?' at length burst from her. 'O tell me what is the meaning of this outrage?'

'All in good time you'll know,' was the reply.

'Now, now, I implore you,' cried Elizabeth ... 'but perhaps,' with a sudden change of voice, 'you've mis-

taken me for some other person. Yes, yes, it must be so,' she added, with a kind of joyful quickness.

'Are you sure it is?' said the ruffian.

'Tell me my name then,' returned Elizabeth, 'and that will put the matter out of doubt.'

'I fancy I shan't be far from the mark, if I say 'tis Munro.'

The shock Elizabeth felt at finding she was wrong in her conjecture, for a few minutes deprived her of the power of utterance; on regaining it, she exerted all her eloquence, to try and prevail on the ruffian to release her.

Her supplications, however, might as well have been addressed to an ear of marble, brutal laughter being all they excited.

Still, however, Elizabeth continued to weep, and to implore, at all events, if he would not release her, to let her know by whom he had been employed to carry her off?

'Did you ever hear of a person of the name of Delacour?' at last asked he.

'Delacour!' repeated Elizabeth. 'Captain Delacour, do you mean? Gracious Heaven, is it possible!....can he be concerned in such a business as this?'

'Both true and possible,' replied the ruffian; 'so, now that I have satisfied your curiosity, I hope you'll be quiet.'

The anguish of Elizabeth, at finding Delacour a villain, was unspeakable; all the bright, the flattering hopes which she had for some time been indulging in, instantly vanished, leaving her mind a prey to the pangs of disappointment and regret. As soon as she had a little recovered the shock occasioned by the discovery of his baseness, she again assailed the ruffian with tears and entreaties but to as little purpose as she had before done; and, at last, in absolute despair of succeeding with him, ceased her importunities.

After proceeding some way in silence, she fancied she heard horses advancing up the dingle; she listened attentively, and soon found her ear had not deceived her; but the shriek which hovered on her lips she suppressed, lest, after all, the persons approaching might not be inclined

to afford her the assistance she required ; when, however, a few minutes after, she beheld a gentleman and his servant within a few yards of her, she could no longer command herself ; a scuffle immediately ensued, which ended in the complete discomfiture and flight of the villain. In a few minutes the faculties which hope, as well as apprehension, had contributed to suspend, being restored, Elizabeth was about thanking her deliverer, when his voice struck her as one she was well acquainted with. Instantly starting from the jutting point of rock on which she had been seated, she caught his arm, and scarcely conscious of what she was about, dragged him from beneath the shadow of the impending cliff, to an open spot, sufficiently light to allow her to distinguish his features, and beheld, as she expected Mr. Eaton.

‘ Oh, now, now,’ she exclaimed, almost with a shriek of transport, and joyfully clasping her hands together, ‘ now, now, I am sure I am safe !’

‘ Safe !’ he repeated in the most exulting accents, and eagerly seizing her hand ; ‘ yes, my life, my soul, my Elizabeth ! I saw,’ added he, ‘ that you did not immediately recollect me, and I feared discovering myself abruptly, lest joy at finding a friend at such a crisis should overcome you ; but you still tremble and appear terrified.’

‘ Terrified !’ repeated Elizabeth....then, suddenly checking herself, unwilling on many accounts to betray her knowledge of the person who had carried her off, and anxious, besides, not to encrease the distress which, by this time, she convinced Mrs. Elford must be in on her account, by delaying her return home, she entreated Mr. Eaton to add to the obligations he had already conferred on her, by immediately seeing her there ; and was proceeding to point out the way, when he interrupted her, to say he was not only well acquainted with her present abode, but the lady she was with.

Leaning on his arm, and followed by his servant leading the horses, they proceeded, without further delay, to the habitation of Mrs. Elford. At the entrance they were met by Mrs. Elford herself, and her servants, all

her to nothing like tranquillity ; she could not reflect on the conduct of Delacour without agony, nor on the evident determination of Eaton to renew his addresses without dismay, since unable, at present, to ascertain whether or not this determination was sanctioned by her parents....if not, she trusted the reserve she resolved on assuming towards him would presently induce him to relinquish it. Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy Sleep, remained a stranger to her eyelids during the night ; but, though the perturbation of her mind made her quit her bed at an early hour, she did not leave her chamber till summoned to breakfast, so unwilling was she to hold any further converse with Mr. Eaton.

She found him in the parlour as expected ; he met her at the entrance with an air of transport, and, taking her evidently reluctant hand, led her to a seat.

For a few minutes, however, no very particular conversation took place ; at length, after a short pause, he suddenly turned towards her, and, with a look of tender reproach, said, he could not help acknowledging he was hurt, yes, to the very soul, at the indifference manifested by her, in not having once enquired where or how he had been since his leaving Heathwood.

Elizabeth blushed, and began stirring her tea, in order to have a pretext for avoiding his eyes, since, though she did not by any means choose him to suppose she ever meant to favour his addresses, neither did she like him to imagine her rude or ungrateful. At last, but hesitatingly...‘ I don't like to be inquisitive,’ said she.

‘ Inquisitive ! Ah, Elizabeth,’ in accents of mingled reproach and tenderness, ‘ in some situations, not to be inquisitive is to wound and offend, from the indifference it betrays. But I will not torture myself by imputing to indifference the carelessness you manifest about me.... no, to pique will I ascribe it, a pique which, all things considered, I cannot wonder at. I did not, however, leave Heathwood, as you were led to suppose, without assigning a sufficient reason for not calling on you previous to my departure, as I am satisfied you would have allowed, had the explanatory letter I wrote you on the subject reached your hands ; but, instead of that being

the case, the stupid blockhead to whose care it was committed, mislaid it, and thus caused me to incur what none ever less merited (as I have proved to your parents,) resentment and suspicion.'

Elizabeth started at these words, and lifted her hitherto downcast eyes to his.

'Yes,' pursued he, 'I have been to Heathwood again, and have not only seen your father and mother, but so thoroughly justified myself in their opinion, as to obtain their permission to follow you hither. When we met last night (so fortunately I flatter myself for both, I was hastening to throw myself at your feet, but forebore hinting my intentions, in consequence of the agitation you were then in. See,' drawing out a pocket-book, and taking a letter from it, 'my authority for coming here.... did you ever,' holding up the letter to her with a gay or rather playful air, 'see any hand this reminds you of?'

Elizabeth, with encreasing agitation, cast her eyes on the superscription.... 'Yes,' she replied, 'tis like my father's.'

'You are not mistaken; 'tis written by him and addressed to you,' kissing and presenting it to her as he spoke.

Elizabeth, trembling from her anticipation of its contents, broke the seal, and read as follows :

To Miss Munro.

'I DESIRED you, my dearest girl, to consider yourself released from your engagement to Mr. Eaton, but I did so merely because I thought he did not merit your keeping it; the circumstances which led me to think so have been explained so entirely to my satisfaction, that my opinion of him is totally changed, and, of course, my wishes for your union with him renewed: in honour you are bound to him, and equally so, I hope, by inclination; for I know no man to whom I more sincerely desire to see you married; not, however, let me assure you, because I know his fortune to be large, and his connex-

ions illustrious, but chiefly because I know his heart to be good and his disposition amiable....of the nobleness of it, his proposing for you gives undeniable proof, this not being the age in which disinterested love holds sway.

‘ I cannot, my dear child, do justice to your mother’s feelings, and mine, at the contemplation of your smiling prospects ; and equally so, I am convinced, should I find myself unable to paint our anguish, were these prospects not realized, persuaded, as we are, that there is but little probability of so advantageous an opportunity of settling in life again occurring as Mr. Eaton now affords you, and besides, of the derogatory light in which refusing him would make you appear, since, assuredly, either to some unworthy attachment or unjustifiable caprice your doing so would be imputed : my wishes are, and hitherto they have been considered as commands by my dear girl, that you should not only immediately permit the renewal of his addresses, but give him your hand without delay, urgent business, he informs me, requiring his speedy presence in London.

‘ As I think the knowledge of your being the wife of so respectable a man might occasion a pleasing revolution at Glengary, I could wish your nuptials celebrated where you now are, although their being so would prevent your mother and me from having the pleasure of witnessing them, since we could not think of visiting a house so immediately in the vicinity of one we have, at present, so many powerful reasons for disliking to be near. Emboldened by the goodness and condescending manners of Mrs. Elford, I have written to her on the subject, and, should she have no objection, to the ceremony taking place at her house, I trust you will make none, especially as, the day after, Mr. Eaton has promised to return with you to Heathwood, when it will be decided whether you shall now accompany him to London, or defer your visit to that region of luxury and pleasure till the winter....I know you’ll be happy to hear, that, whenever you go, your mother and I are to bear you company.

‘ Mr. Eaton is impatient to be gone....I have therefore only time to add, that your mother unites with me

in fervent wishes for your happiness in the new state you are, we trust, about entering into....but that you will fail of experiencing this with such a man as Mr. Eaton, cannot be doubted either by her or your

‘Affectionate father,

‘ROBERT MUNRO.’

Heathwood.

Elizabeth kept her eyes fixed on this letter long after she had perused it, convinced, the moment she raised them, she should be called upon to ratify hopes revolting to her feelings....hopes, however, which, notwithstanding this, a little deliberation made her resolve on not disappointing; for she saw plainly that the heart of her father was set upon her union with Mr. Eaton; and, as he had hitherto guided, so still she resolved he should guide her, since his judgment she believed unerring, and his advice she knew dictated by solicitude for her welfare.

She strove to argue herself into a belief that her compliance with his wishes in the present instance would soon cease to occasion her pain, that the unworthiness of the object who had first caused an alteration in her sentiments for Mr. Eaton would soon permit her to think of him again as she had originally done; in a word, that she could not see him studying to contribute to her happiness, and that of her family, without experiencing for him feelings calculated to reconcile her to the destiny that made her his.

Spite of these arguments, however, she felt most reluctant to unite her fate with his, insomuch, that, but for the dread she entertained of her refusing him being imputed to an attachment she now blushed to think of, she would in all probability have done so.

Impatient at her silence, as well as evidently alarmed by it, Eaton, at length, in agitated tones enquired, whether or not her father had proved a successful pleader for him?

Elizabeth as she folded up the letter, attempted to say yes; but this, her first effort to speak contrary to her feel-

ings, proved abortive....what she tried to say was inarticulate.

‘Elizabeth,’ exclaimed her impassioned lover, with a flushing cheek and kindling eye, ‘you alarm me by your manner! Have I in vain endeavoured to obtain for myself an interest in your heart? does your father advocate my cause in vain?’

‘No, no,’ faintly replied the agitated Elizabeth, half shunning half meeting the glance of his keenly-enquiring eye.

‘Then you are mine! you are mine! in the most exulting accents. ‘You consent to bless me with this treasure!’ snatching her cold trembling hand, and alternately pressing it to his lips and heart.

Elizabeth bowed.

‘Oh, transport!’ he continued, and, throwing his arms around her, he strained her to his breast, and with his lips would have touched her cheek, but that Elizabeth, trembling and disgusted, shrunk from his grasp.

‘Cruel!’ cried he, as she disengaged herself from his arms, with a countenance expressive of her feelings at the moment. She was, indeed, highly offended by the violence of his transports; since, in the first place, she conceived them unbecoming his years, and, in the next indecorous before a third person. In a few minutes, however, she recollected herself sufficiently to be able to reflect on the necessity there was for wearing a complacent air towards him in future, lest, otherwise, she should lead him to imagine, in consenting to become his, she acted contrary to her inclination, and thus, perhaps, lay the foundation of much future misery to herself and connexions; she tried, therefore, to force a smile, and prevent herself from shrinking at his touch; but painful was the effort it cost her to do this....her whose countenance, till the present moment, had never been illuminated by a smile that did not immediately emanate from her heart.

‘Well, my sweet girl,’ said Mrs. Elford, in the kindest accent imaginable, ‘permit me now to congratulate you on your happy prospects, and to intreat that you will acquiesce in your father’s wishes, for having your nuptials solemnized here....he has, I presume, mentioned to you his letter to me on this subject.’

Again Elizabeth bowed....she could not reply in any other way at the moment.

'He had also, I make no doubt,' said Eaton, in an impatient tone, 'explained the necessity there is for our marriage immediately taking place?'

'Yes,' faltered out Elizabeth.

'Then this evening, my love, my angel,' looking with mingled earnestness and anxiety at her.

She started.

'Well, well, to-morrow then let it be,' he added, in consequence of perceiving the horror the proposition gave her. 'You see, my adorable girl,' again taking her nearly inanimate hand, and pressing his lips to it, 'you have not a very bad chance of happiness with a man who can so readily yield his wishes to yours.'

Elizabeth hesitated for a few minutes; she thought of trying to prevail on him to postpone their marriage till his return from London; but the suspicion of her indifference, which it suddenly occurred to her such a measure might, nay probably would, be the means of exciting in his mind, induced her to relinquish the idea, and, though most reluctantly, consent to be his on the morrow.

CHAP. VI.

"Some say, no evil thing that walks by night,
In fog, or fire, by lake, or moorish fen,
Blue meagre hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost,
That breaks his magic chains at curfew time,
No goblin, or swart fairy of the mine,
Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.
Do you believe me yet? or shall I call
Antiquity, from the old schools of Greece,
To testify the arms of chastity?"

MILTON.

'BUT,' but,' added Elizabeth, in the same faltering voice in which she had expressed her acquiescence to his wishes, 'I....I should like to have.....'

'What, my angel?' finding she paused, eagerly demanded the enamoured Eaton, as he hung over her.

‘Speak your wishes freely ; for if wealth can enable you to gratify them, they shall be gratified.’

‘To have an effort made to overrule my father and mother’s objections to being present at the ceremony,’ languidly returned Elizabeth.

‘Then I will go myself directly to Heathwood, and see what I can do to prevail on them to come hither.’

Elizabeth bowed her thanks ; and, passionately kissing her fair hand, Eaton withdrew, to set out, as he said, on his journey to Heathwood.

Disturbed, distressed, dispirited, Elizabeth would have retired to her chamber the moment he was gone, but that she apprehended she should offend Mrs. Elford by doing so. Of the absence of Eaton this lady took advantage, to expatiate on his pleasing manners, the many amiable qualities he appeared possessed of, and the consequent happiness Elizabeth must experience with a man so every way worthy of her, and possessed besides of a fortune adequate to obtaining every enjoyment, every luxury, this life could afford ; in short, she said every thing likely to dispel the cloud which, it did not require her penetration to perceive, hung upon the beauteous brow of Elizabeth, and plainly evinced her heart taking no pleasure in the prospect before her, all dazzling and glittering as it was.

Never, indeed, had she known what real wretchedness was till the present moment, when she found herself on the point of being united to a man for whom she no longer felt a sentiment of regard. So agonizing was the idea of this union to her, that, more than once, she was tempted to decide on retracting her consent to it, but was still prevented, by the consideration of the disappointment such a measure would be productive of to her father, and the derogatory light in which it must make her character appear : but her thoughts were not entirely occupied by herself...what Delacour felt at the failure of his scheme relative to her, engrossed them not a little.

About sunset Mr. Eaton returned, but unaccompanied by her parents. They could not bear, he said, to come into the neighbourhood of Glengary....‘I trust, how-

‘ever,’ he said, ‘you will not suffer yourself to be much vexed by their refusal, particularly when you reflect, that in a day or two you’ll join them again at Heathwood.’

Elizabeth, however, could not help feeling extremely disappointed at their not coming, as she fancied she should have derived both support and consolation from their presence.

Like the mail, it being our intention to proceed as expeditiously as possible, well knowing that tedious books, like tedious journeys, are fatiguing in the extreme, we shall never follow any of our characters into the closet, for the purpose of detailing their soliloquies, apostrophes, private cogitations, except when we see an absolute necessity for doing so, in order to elucidate some particular circumstance ; we shall now, therefore, in pursuance of the above intention, content ourselves with merely saying, that Elizabeth, on the morning destined to give her hand to Mr. Eaton, appeared with a countenance melancholy but calm, an eye downcast, but unmoistened by a tear.

Mrs. Elford had made it a point that the ceremony should be performed in a consecrated place ; accordingly, an old ruined chapel, a few furlongs from the house, and sunk in a deep hollow, amidst rude rocky mountains, was the one fixed on for the purpose.

The moment breakfast was over, the impatient lover arose, for the purpose of conducting his bride thither. She involuntarily recoiled as he approached to take her hand, but, almost instantly recollecting herself, suffered him to do so, without any further manifestation of reluctance. They were attended by Mrs. Elford, the clergyman, and another gentleman to act the part of nuptial father.

The wild and mournful solitude of the chapel, the desolation every where conspicuous in it, aggravated the feelings, and rendered still more chilling the sensations with which Elizabeth entered it: the roof in many places had fallen in, and the consequent damps had nourished all around that kind of vegetation which announces ruin and desertion....the wild vine gadded over the tombs, grass grew thick in the interstices of the flags, and here

and there the ivy, creeping through the broken beams, twined itself about the mouldering pillars ; the windows, half demolished, half filled up with stones and rubbish, permitted but a partial light to gain admittance, a sickly gleam of sunshine, which, like the smile of despair, served rather to chill than cheer.

The eyes of Elizabeth involuntarily wandered about, and almost as involuntarily she paused, for the purpose of contemplating more attentively some of the melancholy objects upon which they fell.

The impatient Eaton did not allow her long to continue thus employed.... ' My love,' cried he, a little impetuously, as well as a little reproachfully, ' you seem to have forgotten the purpose for which we come hither,' attempting, as he spoke, to draw her on to the altar, or rather place on which the altar had stood, for there was now no remains of one ; but where there had been, there was an elevation of a few steps.

The feelings of Elizabeth at this moment became uncontrollable... she felt as if she was about signing a bond which would tear her from all she held dear on earth.... in the agony of her soul, she unconsciously wrested her hand from Eaton, and sunk, trembling and aghast, against the shoulder of Mrs. Elford.

' She's fainting !' cried he, in accents of alarm.... ' have you nothing to give her to smell to ?'

Mrs. Elford produced a bottle of *eau-de-luce*. Eaton attempted to apply it himself to Elizabeth, but she took it into her own hand ; and, after bending her pale face over it a few minutes.... ' I am better,' said she, but sighing, as if there was an intolerable weight upon her heart.

' Yes, yes, so you are, my angel, and you'll be still better by-and-bye.... the damp and desolation of this place has affected your spirits, so we'll get through our business in it as fast as possible, and be off.'

Again he took her hand ; and motioning to the clergyman, the ceremony was about commencing, when the grating of a small door, leading, by means of a long passage, to the cemetery belonging to the chapel, drew the attention of all towards it ; no one, however, appeared ; and, concluding it was the wind that had moved it, the

clergyman was on the point of proceeding, when again the door grated with more violence than it had before done on its rusty hinges, and the next instant a man, enveloped in a dark grey coat, with a large hat flapped over his face, so as to prevent any part of it from being seen, made his appearance ; and with a slow pace, but an air of firmness, stalked forward till he came exactly opposite Mr. Eaton, when he made a full stop.

‘ Very strange all this !’ cried the latter in visible emotion ; and, after regarding the unexpected intruder for a minute in silence, and with deep attention, ‘ the natural ruby of his cheek too somewhat faded’.... ‘ Say, Sir,’ in a tone of fierceness, ‘ what is the meaning of this conduct ?....Speak !....Who are you ?’

‘ Behold !’ replied the other, in a voice of thunder, and taking off his hat.... ‘ Behold !’ and, drawing nearer to him, he fastened on him eyes gleaming with scorn, indignation, and fury.

‘ Ha !....you here !’ Exclaimed Eaton, recoiling at the same time as if he had seen a serpent.... ‘ Perdition ! what brought you hither ?’

‘ Away, vile wretch !’ returned the other, indignantly waving his hand.... ‘ Away !....the spear of Ithuriel is advancing against thee....thy native deformity can no longer remain concealed. Away ! thy lingering here avails thee not ; thy intended victim is completely rescued from thee.’

Eaton, though evidently overwhelmed with confusion, attempted to say something ; instead, however, of listening to him, the stranger turned towards the door by which he had himself entered, as if for the purpose of calling for assistance. Upon this, Eaton, with a horrible imprecation, precipitately quitted the chapel, followed by Mrs. Elford and his two other friends.

The astonishment of Elizabeth, during this scene, may easier be conceived than described....it was such as rendered her motionless.

‘ Sweet girl,’ cried the stranger, his angry voice and countenance changing into mildness the moment he found they were alone ; ‘ sweet girl,’ drawing near her, and, with an air at once tender and respectful, taking her

hand, 'you look not only surprised, but dismayed....but be not alarmed you are no longer in danger. 'Yes,' observing the wild look she gave him at these words, 'I repeat, in danger; for, but a minute ago, you stood on the very brink of a precipice. But I will not torture your feelings by affecting mystery; to be explicit then, know, that the man, or rather fiend, for that title best becomes him, since there is nothing he has not done to degrade the character and native dignity of man, he, I say, to whom you were on the point of giving your hand, is already the husband of another....of one too of the most amiable as well as injured of women....a father also, and of a daughter as lovely and innocent as yourself.'

Elizabeth clasped her hands, and looked up....'Accept, oh gracious Heaven,' she exclaimed, 'accept my thanks, my adoration, for thy interposition in my favour!'

'Yet this monster's name is coupled with praise,' resumed the stranger, 'nay, by your parents....they regard him as the best of men....they put their fate into his hands. But you will cease to wonder at this, when I tell you that he is.....'

'Who?' demanded Elizabeth, panting, and unconsciously grasping his arm.

'Lord O'Sinister.'

In manifest horror Elizabeth recoiled a few paces from him, faintly repeating the name he had uttered.

Had the earth gaped beneath her feet....had the foundations of the world been shaken....had the clouds darted forth fire....had, in short, all that this great globe contains seemed ready to perish and dissolve at the moment, she could scarcely have appeared more shocked than she did, at hearing that the intended betrayer of her honour was the patron of her family. The tears, which her chilled heart would not before let her shed, now gushed in torrents from her.

'Ah then, they are ruined! my family are ruined!' she exclaimed, wringing her hands, her father's pecuniary obligations to the wretch recurring to her recollection.

'No, no,' interrupted the stranger; 'I am perfectly aware of your reason for thinking so, but I not only

hope, but am inclined to believe, that Lord O'Sinister will let matters remain as they are.'

'And by what name,' asked Elizabeth, 'am I to mention you in my orisons....you who certainly have been Heaven's instrument to save me from destruction?'

'My name is Breerscroft: I am the brother of Lady O'Sinister. Her knowledge of her Lord's disposition.... a knowledge which, long ago, would have occasioned her to separate herself from him, but on account of her daughter, whom she knew she must then give up, induces her to keep a vigilant eye upon him; not, however, out of any mean jealousy, but principally for the purpose of obtaining opportunities of frustrating his villainous schemes. By means too tedious to relate now, and besides unnecessary for you to hear, she received intimation of his designs on you. The moment she did, she flew to me, as indeed in every emergency she has been wont to do, to entreat me to lose no time in hastening to interpose between you and destruction: I needed not the repetition of this entreaty to induce my doing so, exclusive of the interest which every man of feeling must take in the fate of youth and innocence. I was rendered anxious about yours, by the estimation in which I hold the character of your father, with the chief events of whose life I am acquainted, and, of consequence, the injustice with which he has been treated. I directly repaired from London to Heathwood, where, closely disguised, I hovered about my unworthy relative, and marked the steps he took respecting you. Instead, however, of openly apprizing you of these, I had recourse to an anonymous letter for the purpose, wishing as much as possible, on account of my sister and niece, to screen him from public disgrace, but, at the same time, determined, if I found this had not the desired effect, to enter into a full explanation respecting him. Ere I had time, however, the unexpected return of your father drove him away, but still, aware of the schemes he was capable of forming, I continued to keep a watchful eye upon him, and, at length, but not till after she had got you in to her power, succeeded in discovering that he had employed a woman of the vilest description, to inveigle you

from the protection of your parents. I would instantly have wrested you from her, but that I thought his shame and disappointment would be heightened by not doing so till the last moment. After the open exposure of his baseness to you, I cannot think he will have the effrontery to annoy you again in any direct manner ; and, as to any secret machinations, you will, doubtless, be on your guard.'

' Words are inadequate to express the obligations I owe you, for the interest you have taken in my fate,' returned Elizabeth.

' Had I taken a less animated one, I should have had little pretensions either to honour or humanity.'

' What will you say to me,' rejoined Elizabeth, ' if I ask you to add to these, by conveying me to my parents?'

' That I should conceive myself complimented by your request, but that, at present, you must not think of returning to them ; as you could not do so immediately, and in company with me, without exciting enquiries that could not be evaded, and which would, in all probability, lead to the most unpleasant, it might be fatal, consequences, as your father is not a man to be injured or insulted with impunity.'

' What is to be done then?' demanded Elizabeth, not a little agitated.

' Don't be uneasy ; I have procured you a safe and pleasant asylum with a lady in the neighbourhood, who was formerly acquainted with your father, and has never ceased to esteem him ; and is beside on the most intimate terms with Lady O'Sinister. I confided to her the whole of Lord O'Sinister's conduct respecting you, and prepared her to receive you. A carriage is now waiting at an inn, a little way off, to conduct you to her ; and a servant has been already sent to Mrs. Elford, to demand your things. You must inform your parents that she met you by accident, and discovering your near relationship to her old friend, your father, rested not until she had prevailed on that lady to let you spend some time with her.'

' How kind, how considerate have you been throughout this whole affair,' said Elizabeth.

'Thank Heaven it has terminated as it has,' he replied.

He now led her from the chapel; a few minutes brought them to a small and solitary inn, at which a chaise and pair, with two servants, stood waiting to receive them. They immediately entered it, and, as it drove on, Mr. Beerscroft informed his fair companion, that Mrs. Dunbar, the lady to whom she was going, was a widow, possessed of a large estate in the neighbourhood of Glengary, without children, but surrounded by connexions; and added, he made no doubt, from her amiable manners, and the hospitable and cheerful style in which she lived, Elizabeth would find herself extremely happy with her.

Elizabeth, somewhat calmed by his assuring her he had no apprehension of Lord O'Sinister's proceeding to any extremity against her father, and her heart lightened of an intolerable load, by the idea she no longer hesitated to yield to, of Delacour's having been falsely accused to her....for that her being carried off was by the contrivance of Lord O'Sinister, in order to furnish him with an opportunity of doing something which should make her think him deserving of her regard, his subsequent conduct permitted her not to doubt....was able to listen with attention, and something like pleasure, to his conversation.

After a ride of two hours, she found herself farther advanced than she had ever before been amidst the wild scenery of the Highlands....a scenery which gradually gave a turn to her thoughts, and inspired her with the liveliest sensations of awe, pleasure, and astonishment, by more than answering the ideas she had formed of the sublimity of nature. The carriage, after proceeding some way through a rugged road, hollowed between tremendous precipices, and open to the sea, began to ascend one of the highest of these, presenting in many places frightful chasms, and headlong torrents, to the view: at length, after a tedious and, at least so Elizabeth thought, dangerous ascent, it reached in safety the plain on which the habitation of Mrs. Dunbar stood, a vast and once impregnable fortress, but, at this period, exhibiting the

moss of years upon its towers, over which the blast of ocean howled with no idle threat of injury. A lofty rampart, but overrun with weeds, and in many places broken and gapped, still encircled it; and, at its rear, arose a still steeper height than that it crowned, covered with a deep mass of shade, principally consisting of oaks, through the intertwisted branches of which a torrent was seen flashing and foaming with impetuous fury down a naked rock, which reared high its head amongst those gigantic sons of creation. From the plain the eye sought in vain for

‘The shelter’d eot, or cultivated farm;’

long mountainous tracts covered with heath, gloomy forests of pine and fir, and deep sterile vallies, shrouded by gloomy precipices, and watered by green-tinctured streams, alone met the view, forming altogether, however, a grand and varied prospect, such as could not be contemplated by a mind of any taste without emotion.

As the carriage drove through a long succession of gloomy gateways to an inner court, Elizabeth was almost tempted to imagine she was about entering one of those buildings she had read of in romances, where several unfortunate ladies and knights are made prisoners irrevocably, till released from captivity by the Knight of the Burning Pestle, or some other of equal hardihood. Nor was she less disposed to do so, when, on alighting, she found herself in a spacious hall, hung with armour, and resting its vaulted and richly fretted roof on arches of stone, through which a double row of narrow painted windows were seen, principally composed of stained glass, and divided by a gallery.

From the hall Elizabeth and her companion were conducted up stairs, and through several galleries hung with tapestry and pictures, to the dressing-room of Mrs. Dunbar, where she awaited their arrival.

Nothing could be more gracious than was her reception of Elizabeth; she welcomed her to her mansion, as the daughter of a person for whom she had the sincerest regard, and assured her nothing but her long absence from her native land (Mr. Dunbar, owing to ill health, having passed the principal part of his time abroad,) had

prevented her making minute enquiries after her father, the acquaintance and friend of her juvenile days.

Although beyond the prime of life, her person was still attractive, and the expression of her countenance, and affability and courtesousness of her manners, such as immediately confirmed the prepossession which Elizabeth, from the report of Mr. Beerscroft, had conceived in her favour.

She spoke of Lord O'Sinister's conduct in terms of the highest indignation, and bitterly lamented so amiable a woman as his lady being united to a man capable of such atrocity: notwithstanding the indignation, however, that it inspired her with, she concurred with Mr. Beerscroft in opinion, that it could not be too carefully concealed.

After a general conversation of about an hour, Mr. Beerscroft rose to take his leave, having many particular reasons for wishing it not to be publicly known that he was at present in Scotland: after paying his parting compliments to Mrs. Dunbar, he turned to Elizabeth, and, taking her hand.... 'I shall return,' said he, 'to London, winged with pleasure at the thoughts of having had the happiness of serving so much innocence and sweetness.... above all, the daughter of a worthy man. May the next intelligence I receive of you be, that you are the happy bride of some deserving character, and thus still more securely guarded against the machinations of villainy.' Then respectfully kissing her hand, he relinquished it, and departed, followed by her thanks and benedictions.

As soon as he was gone, Mrs. Dunbar enquired minutely into the whole of his unworthy brother-in-law's conduct to Elizabeth and her family. Her astonishment, on hearing it detailed, fully equalled her indignation.... 'What a propensity to vice must he have,' cried she, 'who can involve himself in so much trouble on its account!....did he take half the pains to be virtuous that he does to be the reverse, what a noble character would he be!'

She then, in her turn, gratified the curiosity of Elizabeth with some particulars respecting Lady O'Sinister and her brother. They were the only offspring, she informed her, of a very opulent merchant in the city of

London, who, contrary to the usual custom, divided his ample property between them, a circumstance which induced Lord O'Sinister, who had always an eye to his own interest, to pay his addresses to the young lady. Mr. Beerscroft was brought up to his father's business, which he found in too flourishing a state, at the old gentleman's decease, to think of withdrawing from : averse, however, to trouble, and inclined besides, to pleasure, he soon resolved on relieving himself from all the fatiguing part of it, by taking an active partner. Naturally of an unsuspecting temper, and of an age, besides, when he formed this resolution, in which the mind is apt to be precipitate in its decisions, he was not long in making choice of one, a man of manners so plausible, that he soon obtained a complete ascendancy over him ; and, by degrees, succeeded in leading him into deep and, so at least to a cool and sober judgment they would have appeared, extravagant speculations, for the carrying on of which, he pretended large sums were requisite, a pretence that obtained for him the wealth he coveted, and of which he had no sooner made himself master, than he decamped, leaving the too credulous Beerscroft stripped of fortune, and ruined in credit, in consequence of the incorrect manner the business had been carried on, from the time he ceased to take an active part in it himself. He fled for consolation to his brother-in-law....but consolation was almost the last thing he had a chance of receiving from him....his sister was sent out of the way, in order to prevent her lending him any assistance ; and the noble Peer did nothing but upbraid and execrate the folly, which permitted the embezzlement of a fortune he had secretly hoped some unexpected casualty might yet have put him in possession of.

In the hour of calamity, rebuke, however it may be merited, should be avoided, since 'tis an hour in which the heart cannot endure it with calmness, particularly if it comes from those whom we fondly imagined would have sympathised in our sufferings.

Beerscroft quitted the mansion of his titled relative with greater precipitation than he had hurried to it, despair in his heart, distraction in his eye, when his good

genius threw him in the way of an old friend, who, like the good Samaritan, carried him to his home, bound up the wounds of his almost broken heart, nor suffered him to leave his hospitable roof till he had obtained him a lucrative situation under government.

The deep impression made on him by Lord O'Sinister's conduct to him in the height of his distress, would have induced him to forego all further communication with his Lordship, but on account of his sister, whom he most tenderly loved, as she did him. His society soon became her chief pleasure, every succeeding day tending still more fully to convince her, that happiness was not to be enjoyed with such a man as

' Fate had made her lord,'

His total want of those virtues he had so well assumed the semblance of when paying his addresses to her...the indignity and cruel malevolence with which he was constantly in the habit of treating her...his abominable hypocrisy...his vile licentiousness, of which scarce a day passed in which some new account did not reach her ears to wound her heart...his ignoble conduct to her beloved brother....all, by degrees, so completely alienated her affection for him, that, but for her daughter, whom in the event of a separation between them, she knew she should not be allowed to retain with her, she would have proposed one.

Aware of the atrocities her lord was capable of committing, she thought herself not only justified, but performing an indispensable duty, in keeping a watch upon him, for the purpose of being enabled in some degree to counteract his schemes. In the measures she had recourse to for defeating them, her brother was not only her confident but chief agent; and to their exertions many a father was indebted for not bewailing the hour he had become one; many a lovely innocent for not perishing like a loathsome weed in the streets of the metropolis.

In addition to these particulars, Mrs. Dunbar further informed her attentive auditor, that generosity was

known but by name to his Lordship ; that he did nothing without a secret view to his own interest or gratification ; yet that, unacquainted as he was in reality with virtue, none could better assume the appearance of it, whenever he found it requisite to do so for the furtherance of his schemes ; in short, that he was a complete man of the world, as the term is generally understood....a violator of every moral obligation, an insidious friend, an implacable enemy, a hardened libertine, holding in absolute detestation his amiable lady, her patient merit, and undeviating rectitude, notwithstanding her thorough knowledge of his baseness, being a kind of reproach to him he could not bear, nor more regarding his lovely daughter, but on account of the still more illustrious and extensive connexions she might be the means of enabling his to form. But what had brought him to Firgrove, a seat she knew he disliked, from his remoteness from the capital, where he could indulge his vicious propensities without fear of absolute exposure, for, in order to be better enabled to deceive, he wished to conceal his character from the world, Mrs. Dunbar could not pretend to say.

We, however, being better informed on the subject, are able to state, that his visit to it was on account of a married lady of distinction in the neighbourhood, with whom he had formed an acquaintance the preceding winter, and whose husband was a gallant officer, then risking his life abroad in the service of his king and country. The place in which their assignations were generally kept, was the ruined Abbey ; and, in order to prevent the least danger of intrusion, his Lordship employed Mr. Jenkins, his valet, confidant, and prime agent in every villainy, to make use of some contrivance for keeping the rustics away from it. To the ingenuity, therefore, of this gentleman, was owing the noises and appearances that so alarmed and astonished the simple inhabitants of Heathwood.

An easy conquest was never a valued one by Lord O'Sinister ; his passion, therefore, for this lady quickly subsided, and, about the same period, he accidentally, but without being seen himself, beheld the fair Elizabeth....

' Her form fresher than the morning rose
When the dew wets its leaves; unstain'd and pure
As is the lily, or the mountain snow.'

That very instant love, but not, like Palemon's, chaste desire, sprung in his heart; and he resolved not to rest, until he had discovered who she was, and made an effort to introduce himself to her. As usual, he had recourse to Jenkins, to obtain him the information he desired; and, by his means, soon learnt her name and situation in life. This, however, did not satisfy him; ere he commenced his plans against her, he conceived it requisite to know the principles of her parents, and how they were circumstanced. Accordingly, a pretext was formed for bringing Stubbs to him, whom the indefatigable Jenkins soon succeeded in learning was able to give him all the particulars he required. Convinced, from the account the honest rustic gave of Munro, that to hope to overcome his principles, or elude the vigilance with which he watched over his daughter, would be ridiculous, he conceived the project of getting him out of the way, by offering him the adjutancy of his regiment; and also (under the supposition of his resembling his father in point of disposition) of keeping the son from Heathwood, by promising to become his patron in future.

On succeeding in this, he lost no time in introducing himself to the innocent Elizabeth and her mother, under the fictitious name of Eaton....fearing to do so by his own, lest premature suspicion should be excited. Accustomed to deceive and triumph, he flattered himself he should find her an easy victim: to his extreme disappointment and mortification, however, he soon perceived that there was not the smallest chance of succeeding with her by the common arts of seduction....by any other, notwithstanding her youth, innocence, inexperience, and consequent unsuspicion of the deceitfulness of mankind, but by apparently honourable means, or actual violence....to which last measure he was unwilling to have recourse, lest it should deprive him of all chance of obtaining her heart, for the possession of which he now began to be almost as anxious as he was for the possession of her person. At

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length he decided on making her a matrimonial overture, and, if she rejected it, on carrying her off....than which nothing could be easier, as he had several emissaries constantly in pay, capable of executing any villainy he set them on.

The rapture he derived, from Elizabeth's acceptance of his addresses, was not a little damped by her father's positively interdicting their nuptials, till he had received unquestionable proofs of his respectability. The chagrin, however, this interdiction caused him, the scheme he formed for deceiving him on the subject, quickly enabled him to get over, but for carrying which into effect he was prevented by a hint from Mrs. Munro, that she would on no account consent to the marriage of her daughter, till her father could be present at it; and, in its place, formed the horrible project of incapacitating Munro, by personal injury, from retaining the situation he had given him, (a project which had nearly been attended with fatal consequences, the ruffian whom he employed on this occasion being of a still more atrocious disposition than himself,) and reducing him to such a state of poverty, by the destruction of his habitation, as would prevent him, he trusted, from throwing new obstacles in the way of his wishes. The partial failure of it threw him into a rage that exceeded description, in the first paroxysm of which, he again thought of carrying off Elizabeth, but again relinquished the idea, from the dread he entertained, of converting the favourable sentiments he had reason to believe she then entertained for him into horror and disgust, by such a step: the one he had at length recourse to, for getting her into his power, succeeded according to his wishes. The dread he experienced of his conduct towards her being resented by her father or brother, gave way to the conviction of their being both in his power.... the former in consequence of the bond he had given him, and which, by a legerdmain trick of Mr. Jenkins, was made payable on demand, and the other, from knowing he had no chance of preferment but through his means.

Mrs. Elford, his vile confederate, in order to prevent any thing like suspicion entering the mind of Elizabeth, took advantage of what she told her respecting Delacour,

to instruct the ruffians, who carried her off, to say that he was the person who employed them.

In short, from the whole of Lord O'Sinister's conduct, it was evident, that, as a much admired writer has observed, 'when villainy gets the ascendancy, it seldom leaves the wretch, till it has thoroughly polluted him.'

Elizabeth, having heard all the particulars she desired to know respecting the family of Lord O'Sinister, next enquired after that of Glengary. Mrs. Dunbar, in reply, informed her, she so seldom visited there, she could give her but little information concerning them, but that she would introduce a person to her, the Irish house-keeper belonging to it, who frequently visited her's, for the purpose of having her curiosity fully gratified. After a little further conversation, she conducted her to the chamber prepared for her, a spacious and pleasant apartment, with a dressing-room adjoining, in which Elizabeth found the things she had brought with her from Heathwood already deposited. Mrs. Dunbar soon after left her to prepare for dinner; not, however, without first offering to send her woman to assist her in dressing....an offer which Elizabeth, accustomed on all occasions to be her own handmaid, and wishing, besides, to be left for a little time to herself, in order to collect her scattered thoughts, and endeavour to regain the composure the events of the few last hours had disturbed, declined.

When she reflected on these events, she could scarcely believe herself awake, so strange did they appear; gradually, however, the horror with which they inspired her gave way to the delightful consideration, of being again at liberty to indulge the predominant feelings of her heart: she dwelt, with a degree of pleasure that recalled to her cheek the colour which terror and anxiety had banished from it, on the probability there was of her shortly meeting Delacour again....she no longer, in consequence of his being restored her good opinion, by her detection of the artifices of Mrs. Elford, thought with resentment of the failure of his promised visit....no longer entertained a doubt of his being able to account for in a satisfactory manner, whenever she should see him....in a word, she again felt happy....again gave way to hope

and expectation : the idea, also, of being at length introduced into the kind of society she had so long wished to mix in, (Mrs. Dunbar having given her to understand that she had now not only a number of friends on a visit to her, but large parties every day to dinner,) added not a little to her spirits. As soon as she was dressed, she repaired to her chamber ; but, instead of finding her there, learned from her woman that she was already gone to the drawing-room to receive her company.

Elizabeth felt a little panic-struck at the thoughts of entering the room by herself ; as she found her doing so, however, was not to be avoided, she endeavoured to calm her perturbation, in order to prevent any think like embarrassment being seen in her manner.

The moment she made her appearance, Mrs. Dunbar stepped forward to receive her ; and, taking her by the hand, introduced her, in a general way, to the party, which consisted of a Mrs. Ruthven, her niece, a young and lately married lady ; her husband, a gay and fashionable young man ; Miss Rae, her particular friend ; Lady Lochness, a lively woman of the world ; Mr. Hume, a pert conceited coxcomb ; Mr. Grant, a rather blunt and satirical character, and several other ladies and gentlemen.

The ceremony of introduction over, Elizabeth would quickly have recovered her usual ease, but for the whispering conversation, and rude staring of Mrs. Ruthven and her confidant, Miss Rae, by whom Mrs. Dunbar had, from motives of goodnature, placed her. To neither, indeed, was the sight of such loveliness as she possessed by any means agreeable, as both had an insatiable rage for admiration, and certain views besides, at this juncture, which they much feared her superior attractions would be the means of disappointing.

Mrs. Ruthven was by no means handsome, nor even pleasing in her appearance : her satirical, and often peevish countenance, was a true index of her mind. Granddaughter and heiress to a Scotch baronet of large fortune, her temper, never very amiable, was so completely injured by the excessive indulgence she met from him, and the high sense she was early taught to enter-

tain of her own consequence, that, as she grew up, she became proud, impatient of the slightest controul, capricious, and vindictive. Her grandfather, and the father of her husband, a man also of large fortune, were long and intimately acquainted, and, at an early period, a union between her and young Ruthven was proposed by them; to which, the young gentleman being gay, gallant, and handsome, she made no objection. Her grandfather lived but to see this completed; he died under the pleasing idea of her happiness being secured by it. The very reverse, however, of this was the case....Ruthven's sole inducement for accepting her hand, being to obtain a settlement from his father: nor did he long endeavour to conceal his indifference from her. The discovery of this, by the mortification it inflicted on her vanity, irritated her almost to madness, and, by degrees, so completely alienated her affections from him, as to make her bitterly repent having united herself to him....a repentance which was latterly still further heightened, by a predilection she conceived for another object, with whom, her opinion of her charms being of a very exalted nature, she entertained no doubt she could have readily formed an alliance had she been at liberty.

Miss Rae, her bosom friend, was the daughter of a needy parasite of her grandfather's, who, anxious to get her off his hands, had found means of introducing her into the family, where, by dint of flattery and artifice, she contrived to maintain her ground, and acquire a complete ascendancy over Mrs. Ruthven. Her person was shewy, and so far attracted Mr. Ruthven, as to induce him to pay her attentions that caused her to believe she had made a conquest of him....an idea by no means disagreeable to her, notwithstanding his being the husband of the woman she professed to regard, and to whose kindness she was indebted for almost every advantage she possessed, and every gratification she enjoyed; in short, Mr. Ruthven would have found no difficulty in succeeding with her in the way he wished, but that, just as she was on the point of entering into a capitulation with him, she discovered the criminal passion of his wife; and, under the hope of its leading her into some

step that might yet liberate him, resolved on an immediate change in her conduct....imagining, however, that an alteration in it might occasion an alteration in his intentions relative to her. She was utterly mistaken, no miser being ever more covetous of wealth than he was. Flattering herself, however, that he would lead her to the hymeneal altar, if released from his present matrimonial fetters, she did every thing in her power to instigate his wife to give him an opportunity of breaking them, by secretly reviling him to her, and magnifying the perfections of the man she loved.

Of either the real principles, or present views of her niece, or her confidant, Mrs. Dunbar was alike ignorant and unsuspicious. It must, indeed, have been some very glaring proof of baseness, which could have made her doubt the virtue of the former, so partial was she to her, from the consideration of her being the child of an only and beloved sister. Mrs. Ruthven was not capable of returning her affection : she affected to do so, however, from selfish motives, the principal part of Mrs. Dunbar's fortune being at her own disposal ; but, notwithstanding this, would probably not, to pay her a visit, have quitted London (whither she went immediately after her marriage,) but that she knew the being whom, of all others, she wished to see was at this time her guest.

Relative to Elizabeth, Mrs. Dunbar said nothing more to her visitors than that she was the granddaughter of Mr. Munro of Glengary....that, by chance, she had discovered her being in the neighbourhood....out of regard to her father, had invited her to spend some time with her....and that both her person and manners were attractive. This latter part of her information was by no means agreeable to Mrs. Ruthven or Miss Rae, as both, notwithstanding their vanity, were apprehensive of the effect which a newer face than theirs might have upon the respective objects of their regard. But the uneasiness which they felt before-hand was trifling, compared to what they experienced on seeing Elizabeth, so infinitely did she surpass the expectations which Mrs. Dunbar had raised concerning her. That she did this, however, they would have died almost, ere they would have

acknowledged even to one another; on the contrary, their envy and malice prompted them to say every thing that was depreciating of her, as well as to treat her in a manner calculated to make her think little of herself.

‘ Pretty !’ said Mrs. Ruthven, after rudely staring at her some minutes, in a half whisper to Miss Rae, and with a scornful look ; ‘ ’tis astonishing to me how my aunt can reckon her so.’

‘ Oh, she is so goodnatured,’ returned Miss Rae, with an insidious smile, and carelessly playing with her fan ; ‘ but you know, my dear, women are not allowed to be good judges of the beauty of one another ; we should ask the gentlemen their opinion....what say you, Hume ?’ addressing herself to him, as he stood leaning over the back of the sofa she and her friend occupied.

‘ Say, why, that when a man’s thoughts are entirely occupied by the charms of one lady, ’tis utterly impossible for him to decide upon those of another,’ and, with a half suppressed sigh, he cast a languishing glance at Mrs. Ruthven, whose rage for admiration he had sufficient penetration to perceive, and to whom, it being a maxim with him to pay court wherever fortune smiled, he paid the most extravagant homage.

‘ Or by himself, you might have added,’ cried Mr. Grant, who, as he was passing near where he stood, overheard him.

‘ Nay, as to that matter, I flatter myself no one can pretend to say I entertain too exalted an opinion of myself.’

‘ Yet, if any one else entertained half as good a one of you, I should then allow you really had reason for vanity.’

‘ And pray,’ somewhat nettled, ‘ how do you know that that may not be the case ?’

‘ Oh, perhaps so, for some people have strange tastes, and little judgment.’

‘ What a savage !’ exclaimed the irritated Hume to the two ladies, as Grant walked away. ‘ I wonder Mrs. Dunbar can encourage his visits.’

‘ Perhaps,’ said Miss Rae sneeringly, the slighting manner in which Hume had treated her, in consequence

of looking upon her rather in the light of an humble companion to Mrs. Ruthven, having provoked her malice against him, 'the truths he tells her are not quite so disagreeable as those he tells you.'

CHAP. VII.

'Under how hard a fate are women born !
Priz'd to their ruin, or expos'd to scorn,
If we want beauty, we of love despair,
And are besieg'd, like frontier towns, if fair.'

WALL.

ELIZABETH could not conceive what could be the cause of the malignant and disdainful glances she received from Mrs. Ruthven and Miss Rae. She had been introduced to them in a way to entitle her to their respect, and fully sensible there was nothing in her own manner calculated to offend. If the rest of Mrs. Dunbar's visitors deported themselves in a similar manner, she felt she should not be very desirous of prolonging her stay under her roof.

But of total neglect she had not long reason to complain. Mr. Ruthven was charmed with her appearance, and lavish in his eulogiums ; nor rested until he had introduced himself to her particular notice.

This gentleman, beneath the semblance of the most thoughtless good humour, concealed a disposition not inferior in point of art to Lord O'Sinister's, and was, if possible, a still more dangerous character than his Lordship, as, unlike him, he was possessed of all the advantages of youth. In his admiration of beauty, he was enthusiastic, nor ever permitted any consideration whatever to prevent his pursuing the object he admired. He knew this was Elizabeth's first visit to this part of the Highlands, and led to a conversation, by asking her opinion of the scenery. His manners were agreeable, and Elizabeth, besides, was too well pleased to be relieved from the

awkward situation which being unnoticed by all made her feel herself in, to discourage the inclination he manifested to pay her attention.

The rage and jealousy of Miss Rae exceeded description ; she trembled at the idea of her hopes respecting him being disappointed through her means, and, in the bitterness of her heart at their apprehended annihilation, curst; as fervently as he blessed, the chance which had thrown her in the way of Mrs. Dunbar. She left no art unessayed, to try to detach him from Miss Munro, but in vain. He heard not her sighs....he saw not her frowns or smiles....he had, in short, no ears, no eyes, but for the lovely creature with whom he was then conversing, and whose equal in beauty he thought he had never seen.

Mrs. Ruthven wished to see him engaged in some affair that might justify, or, in some degree at least, excuse the step she herself meditated taking ; for through the artful instigations of her unprincipled confidant, she had come to the resolution of no longer resisting the dictates of inclination : still, however, notwithstanding this resolution, and the above wish, she could not help being mortified at his conduct to Elizabeth, so malignant were the feelings with which her charms had inspired her.

Elizabeth, prevented by the conversation into which she had entered with Ruthven from further noticing the scowling glances of his lady and her friend, and alike unconscious of the envy and admiration she had excited, soon regained her wonted ease and animation.

On the announcement of dinner, Ruthven took her hand to lead her to the dining parlour. In their way thither, her attention was suddenly diverted from what he was saying to her, by hearing Lady Lochness enquiring of Mrs. Dunbar, whether she did not expect Captain Delacour to dinner ?

‘ Captain Delacour !’ (it may be recollected he had not mentioned to her the name of his relation,) repeated Elizabeth involuntarily, and with a glowing cheek, turning her eyes full upon Ruthven.... ‘ Does he visit here ?’

‘ Why, do you know him ?’

‘Perhaps not the Captain Delacour that visits here,’ returned Elizabeth, hesitating a little, and blushing still more deeply at the look with which this enquiry was accompanied.

‘What kind of person is the one you know?’

‘Oh, a very handsome man,’ said Elizabeth, again speaking in the fulness of her heart.

‘A very handsome man!’ echoed Ruthven, in an arch accent, and with a corresponding look. ‘Upon my word, this will be flattering information for Delacour. I see, when ladies are taken by surprise, they will sometimes speak their real sentiments.’

‘Nay,’ cried Elizabeth, greatly confused, ‘I only meant to say, that....’

‘He was reckoned handsome by every one you knew, and that you subscribed to the general opinion: but to reply to your question. From what you have said of the Captain Delacour you know, he is the same, I fancy, who is now on a visit here, the nephew of Mrs. Dunbar’s late husband.’

The pleasure which this intelligence afforded Elizabeth she endeavoured to conceal under an air of indifference, in order to avoid giving Mr. Ruthven fresh cause for raillery; but in vain she strove to divert his conversation from what she had just said. He continued to revert to it, till at length the pain he caused her became too obvious to permit of his continuing it.

During the whole of dinner, to the unutterable mortification of Miss Rae, his attention was almost entirely engrossed by her.

A short time after they were seated at table, Elizabeth was again attracted from him, by hearing Lady Lochness asking Mrs. Dunbar, whether she knew the reason of Captain Delacour not dining at home?

‘No, indeed,’ replied Mrs. Dunbar: ‘I only know that he came into my dressing-room about an hour ago, to request I might not wait dinner for him, as he was going out immediately, and it was very uncertain when he should return.’

‘An hour ago,’ Elizabeth repeated to herself; then, in all probability, he already knew of her being an in-

mate under the roof of his aunt. Oh! if he did, and his feelings at this juncture at all correspond with her's.... she could not help flattering herself they might.

'What curiosity!' cried Grant, alluding to Lady Lochness's enquiries concerning Delacour; 'but I never knew a woman, at least a woman of fashion, who did not like to pry into the affairs of other people. Hence, to their inordinate curiosity about these, the little attention they bestow on their own.'

'Why you good-for-nothing creature,' returned Lady Lochness, 'if we had not curiosity, where would be our knowledge?'

'Better be without knowledge, than such as your curiosity leads you to acquire, the knowledge of your neighbour's faults, for the sake of publishing them.'

'You are a downright slanderer, and as such I believe I shall be tempted to erase you from the list of my favourites.'

'The list will be but a small one I am afraid, if there are none upon it but such as merit not the appellation you have bestowed upon me.'

'Tis too bad, indeed,' said Hume, in an affected tone, 'to rail at the loveliest part of creation, without whom, as the poet elegantly says....' We had been brutes.'

'Yes, and whom you admire so much,' rejoined Grant, 'that you endeavour to imitate them as much as possible. But, in reply to your observation, I always rail against those who are most deserving of censure. There was a time, indeed, when the women of this country were better than they are at present, but now they are quite as bad as any of their neighbours on the Continent....as well skilled in making for themselves other faces than those which Nature has made for them, in jigging, ambling, lipping, and nicknaming heaven's creatures.'

'Tis a sure sign the days of chivalry are past, else you would not,' said Lady Lochness, 'be allowed to vent you spleen against us with impunity.'

'The ladies need no champions now,' remarked a gentleman; 'they only required them in those dark and barbarous ages, when they were too much confined to allow of their merits being fully known.'

'Your railing against the sex, let me tell you, Grant,' said Ruthven, 'is a sure sign of your having met with a grievous disappointment from some fair lady.'

'A most indubitable one, indeed,' uttered Hume. 'Yes, 'tis clearly evident, Grant, from your invectives against 'Heaven's last, best work,' that you have worn the willow in your day; but I suppose you were not aware of the construction your sarcasms were liable to, or you would not have uttered them. You see what it is not to have reflection.'

'Yes, and hear what it is whilst I listen to you.'

The entrance of Captain Delacour with a hurried step interrupted this conversation; and, as soon as he had paid his compliments in a general way to the company, with all of whom he seemed perfectly well acquainted, he approached a chair, which had been kept vacant for him, between Mrs. Ruthven and Miss Rae.

'You told me, my dear George,' said Mrs. Dunbar, and, by a glance of her expressive eyes, directing his to Elizabeth, whom he appeared before not to have seen, 'that you had the honour of being acquainted with Miss Munro.'

'I did, Madam,' replied he, smiling and bowing to Elizabeth, 'and trust I have the happiness of now seeing Miss Munro well.'

Elizabeth replied by a bow, too much confused, and perhaps agitated at the moment, to speak, owing to the scrutinizing earnestness with which she saw herself regarded by Ruthven, from the moment Delacour entered the room.

The conversation now became more general. Delacour supported his part in it with the utmost animation, but did not again particularly address himself to Elizabeth, a circumstance she did not, in consequence of the manner in which she was then situated, regret, especially as from the glances she from time to time caught from him, she had reason to believe it was not for want of inclination.

The looks of Ruthven were not more closely watched on this occasion by Miss Rae, than were those of Delacour by Mrs. Ruthven, he being the object of her heart's

present devotion : their acquaintance had commenced in London ; and it was the knowledge of his paying a visit to her aunt, that had induced her also to do so.

Delacour, though possessed, perhaps, of as little vanity as any of his sex, could not help, from the conduct of this lady, beginning at last to suspect what was passing in her mind, a suspicion which, from the manner in which she was situated, afforded him great uneasiness ; nor would it have given him pleasure, even though she had been single, as she was by no means the kind of woman he could admire.

Of the person of Delacour, a description has already been given. He was at this period in his seven-and-twentieth year, and already high in his profession, the navy. From nature he inherited all that generous openness of soul, that contempt of every thing mean and sordid, that careless prodigality, which in general characterises those belonging to his profession. Of him, with truth, his father might have predicted what the father of the gallant but unhappy De Moor did of his son.... ‘ From that spirit of fire, which sparkled forth even in his boyish years, which shewed itself in an exquisite sensibility to every thing that was great or beautiful, that generous openness of character, the soul which spoke forth in his eyes, that tenderness of feeling, that manly courage, that youthful thirst of honour, that inflexible resolution, and all those shining qualities that adorned him, that he would one day be the delight of his friends, and active supporter of his country.’

His mother was the sister of Mr. Dunbar, and died whilst he was quite an infant. His father, the descendant of a noble house, and brought up, like himself, to the navy, had the happiness of living long enough to see his name enrolled in the list of the valiant. He was a good and gallant officer, and would, in all probability have been able to have left him a handsome fortune, but for an unfortunate intimacy he contracted with Lord O’Sinster, who took advantage of a naturally careless and unsuspicious temper, to draw him into errors, that ultimately occasioned a considerable derangement in his affairs. A small independence was, however, secured to

his son, but which he, with true filial piety, in order to prevent any obloquy resting on his memory, surrendered to his creditors, until their demands were satisfied, contenting himself till then with merely the emoluments of his profession.

His late uncle, Mr. Dunbar, as well as his lady, had always paid him particular attention, insomuch that he had ever felt for them the sincerest affection, and gladly embraced the opportunity, which the refitting of the vessel he commanded at Portsmouth, and preparing it for a long voyage, afforded him, of paying a visit to Black Crag, the seat of the latter.

The ladies had scarcely returned to the drawing-room, ere a large party, invited for the evening, began to assemble; and Elizabeth soon understood that a dance was in agitation for the younger part of the company. A handsome suite of rooms was thrown open, through which they promenaded, in detached parties, during tea, and previous to the commencement of cards and dancing. Every one looked gay, every one looked happy, and the cheerfulness of the scene could not have failed of exhilarating the spirits of Elizabeth, but for the cruel damp thrown upon them, by the neglect she experienced, in consequence of the conduct of Mrs. Ruthven.

Busy in arranging the card-tables, Mrs. Dunbar left to that lady the receiving her guests, and introducing Elizabeth to them, of which she entertained not a doubt. But, instead of paying her the attention she knew her aunt both expected and wished, and also what politeness demanded, she permitted Elizabeth to remain totally unnoticed in a corner of the room; and, in reply to the natural enquiry of who she was, maliciously insinuated, for the purpose of having her entirely neglected, that she was quite an intruder upon her aunt, who meant, as soon as possible, to get rid of her, lest the family at Glengary should be offended at her being harboured so near them. This information had the effect she desired, as the only circumstance which could have induced any of the party then assembled to have incurred the risk of offending Mrs. Munro, by noticing a person so obnoxious, as it was justly concluded Elizabeth must be to her, would

have been the idea of pleasing Mrs. Dunbar, whose entertainments were equally delectable.

At length, the sound of music in a remote apartment caused every one but Elizabeth, and those who were at cards, to hasten thither ; and she was shortly compelled to follow, in consequence of Mrs. Dunbar's perceiving her sitting pensively on a window by herself.

With the greatest reluctance, and no little confusion, she entered the dancing room, fearful of being reckoned an intruder, it being evident to her, that the mortifying neglect she experienced was premeditated. She found the party quite in a gay tumult and only waiting for the gentlemen from the dining parlour to commence dancing.

At length they began to make their appearance. Ruthven was amongst the first who entered, and instantly espying Elizabeth, who, finding a vacant sofa near the door, had seated herself, approached, and took a seat beside her.

Ere he had well opened his lips Delacour also entered, and bent his steps towards the seat occupied by Elizabeth. But, instead of stopping as he had done, glided past with a slight bow, and going up to Miss Rae in a moment after, led her out to dance.

The pang which seized the heart of Elizabeth at the instant was too great for description. The pleasing hopes and expectations, which had again sprung up in her mind, directly vanished, leaving it a prey to shame and regret, for ever having given way to such ideas. ' And yet, had I not some cause ? ' she said to herself ; ' but no, my vanity misled me, and perhaps to a suspicion of its having done so, is owing his not having treated me even as a common acquaintance.'

In the confusion and disturbance of her mind she forgot who was sitting by her, till restored to recollection by a rallying speech on her silence, and the sudden change that had taken place in her countenance. This remark so terrified her, with the idea of what was really passing in her mind at the moment being suspected by Ruthven, as to cause her to immediately endeavour to collect her thoughts ; and, though never less inclined to gaiety, she

permitted him, for the purpose of better deceiving him with regard to her feelings, to lead her to the dancers.

Mrs. Ruthven, although much dissatisfied at her hand not having been solicited by Delacour, still derived some consolation from his having selected her confidant, little aware that Miss Rae was so much engrossed at the moment by her own concerns, as to be utterly incapable of attending either to her's, or any other persons. Apprehension was now beginning to be converted into certainty. In the looks, the attentions of Ruthven to Elizabeth, Miss Rae saw every indication of his feeling that passion for her, which but a short time before she hoped she had herself inspired. If she could not recal him, she determined at all events not to sit down quietly under the disappointment he had inflicted on her, but to endeavour to make him experience in his turn something like what he had made her suffer; and this she flattered herself she should easily be able to do by means of his wife, who, if once assured there was a likelihood of discovering something in his conduct to excuse her own, would, she made no doubt, be too vigilant a spy upon his actions to permit his having the opportunities he might wish for with Elizabeth.

The set being nearly completed by the time Elizabeth and Ruthven joined it, they were almost the last couple, a circumstance of which Mrs. Ruthven, intent upon wounding the feelings of Elizabeth in every instance, took advantage to cause them to be left almost entirely by themselves, when it was their turn to lead off.

This rudeness determined Elizabeth on letting nothing again induce her to join the set; she could not conceal the indignation it excited in her bosom, an indignation in which her partner pretended to participate; although in reality he rejoiced at the circumstance that awakened it, since the greater the neglect she experienced from others, the greater would be the value, he flattered himself, she would set upon his attentions.

He resisted her importunities to leave her, that he might not on her account lose the amusement of the evening; and his attaching himself entirely to her being imputed by Elizabeth, in the purity of her heart, to good nature, she

forced herself to appear pleased with his conversation, in order to evince to him her gratitude for his attentions.

Ruthven, almost as vain as he was designing, quickly began to ascribe to the motives most flattering to himself, the smiles and seeming pleasure with which she listened to and conversed with him. The idea of having already made an interest for himself in her heart gave a flow to his spirits, that rendered him really entertaining....‘ the very soul of whim and spirit of variety.’

But, notwithstanding his amusing versatility, the eyes, as well as the thoughts of Elizabeth, frequently wandered, but never for any length of time, delicacy making her shrink from the idea of being suspected of an attachment to a person who appeared so totally uninterested about her.

There was no regular supper, to the great joy of Elizabeth, as she felt she should have been painfully embarrassed by the observations being stationary for any time, might have subjected her to. To her, whose cheek, till the present moment, had never been dimpled by a smile that did not immediately emanate from her heart, the assumption of a gaiety she did not feel was too painful not to induce her to seize the first opportunity that occurred for withdrawing for the night.

In the solitude of her chamber, the feelings she had with such difficulty restrained could no longer be controuled ; alternately her heart swelled with indignation, and sickened with regret.

She wondered whether Mrs. Dunbar had noticed the supercilious treatment she had experienced from Mrs. Ruthven and Miss Rae ; but no....when she retrospected her conduct, and reflected on the character Mr. Beerscroft had given her, she felt convinced if she had she would have interfered ; and to this conviction was alone owing her not resolving to depart from her mansion the ensuing day.

A critical review of the conduct of Delacour confirmed her belief of his indifference, which, ere long, however, she trusted she should think of, without the chilling sensations it at present gave her. Yes, she trusted her exertions would enable her to overcome a passion so inimical to her peace, and which both her pride and reason

stimulated her to conquer, since it was revolting to every feeling of delicacy, to think of cherishing a partiality that was not reciprocal.

She did not quit her chamber in the morning till summoned to the breakfast-room, where she found a large party assembled, amongst which was Delacour; and Ruthven, under the expectation of her approach, was loitering near the door. The instant she appeared, he took her hand, and leading her to a chair, took one beside her, and recommenced those attentions he had paid her the preceding day. During breakfast a lively and pretty general conversation was supported, and various arrangements made, for passing the morning.

‘Which party do you intend to join, Miss Munro?’ asked Mrs. Dunbar with a smile; and after she had informed her she would not invite her to be of her’s, as she was going to pay some stupid visits in the neighbourhood....

‘I don’t wish to go out, Madam,’ replied Elizabeth (but timidly,) convinced that she should not be a welcome addition to any one of them, yet fearful her refusal, as she could not think of assigning the proper reason for it, might be imputed by Mrs. Dunbar to an unsocial or capricious disposition.

‘And pray, my dear,’ returned Mrs. Dunbar, in an accent expressive of surprise, ‘what do you mean to do with yourself?’

‘I have found some entertaining books in my chamber, with which I can amuse myself, Madam,’ replied Elizabeth, with still greater timidity.

‘So studious,’ said Mrs. Dunbar; ‘but do as you please my dear; I always wish my guests to follow their own inclinations, that they may feel themselves at home.’

As the party were separating after breakfast, a servant whispered Mrs. Dunbar; upon which she beckoned to Elizabeth, and in a low tone of voice, told her she would find some one waiting to see her in her chamber.

Elizabeth instantly guessed who she meant; and hastening thither, found, as she expected, Mrs. M’Tulloch, the Irish housekeeper, from Glengary, of whom mention has been already made, impatiently awaiting her ap-

proach, Mrs. Dunbar having good-naturedly sent to inform her of her being at Black Crag.

Her joy at beholding the daughter of her dear young master, as she still continued to style Captain Munro, filled her eyes with tears, and affected the grateful heart of Elizabeth not a little.

As soon as their mutual emotion had a little subsided, Mrs. M'Tulloch gratified her with same particulars of the family of Glengary.

'Both by his looks and manner, the old gentleman,' she said, 'now appeared to be, what he was in reality, well stricken in years; but notwithstanding which, still led a bustling life, Mrs. Munro never being happy but when in a crowd. But not satisfied with his letting her go where she pleased, and see whom she pleased, nothing would content her but his permitting her to render him ridiculous; as a proof of which,' the housekeeper added, 'he was now getting by heart, or at least trying to do so, some speeches for a character she had persuaded him to appear in at a masquerade she was about giving the ensuing week, in consequence of hearing such entertainments were quite the fashion amongst the fine folks in London, and for which great preparations were making.

'I don't well understand the rights of the character,' continued Mrs. M'Tulloch, 'in which the poor foolish old gentleman has been thus persuaded to expose himself; but as well as the servants who have heard them conversing about it at table can make it out, 'tis that of a king....the king of Morven, I think....a king that's of great note in a book that was written in these parts by a man of the name of Ocean....a queer name, is it not, Miss Munro, for a man?

Elizabeth merely smiled, and she thus went on :....

'Mrs. Munro, for herself, has fixed upon that of a great favourite of this old king's, the white-armed daughter of Toscar, whoever Toscar was; but how she will make herself pass for the white-armed daughter of Toscar, or Foscar, or any other person, I cannot conceive for the soul of me, except she keeps her white leather gloves on the whole evening, since her arms are as red as a milk-maid's of a frosty morning; and no wonder, after

all they have gone through, to be sure. How any one could take a fancy to her, and others so infinitely preferable (taking a sly peep at a glass she was sitting opposite,) will never cease to surprise me ; but there is no accounting for taste.'

Whether she had succeeded in getting the old gentleman to secure his property to her after his decease, Mrs. M'Tulloch was not able to inform Elizabeth ; but from the ascendancy she had obtained over him, it was rather to be apprehended she had.

Amongst other intelligence, Mrs. M'Tulloch told her Sir Patrick Dunboyne, the brother of the late Mrs. Munro, and of course her great-uncle, was expected over every day from Ireland, to spend some time at Glengary, which he was often in the habit of doing.

'He has not behaved kindly to my father,' said Elizabeth, with some little emotion.

His not appearing to have done so, Mrs. M'Tulloch immediately assured her with warmth, was owing not to want of regard, but power to render him any essential service, in consequence of the embarrassed state of his finances ; besides which, (proceeded she) he knew if he took any notice of his nephew, he should be prevented visiting at Glengary, which, on his account, he was anxious to persevere in doing, hoping by such means to yet obtain an opportunity of serving him with his father ; that he held Mrs. Munro in the most sovereign contempt was evident, both to herself and every other person, notwithstanding which she was too much gratified by the notice of so near a relation of her predecessor's, not to pass over the slights she met with from him.

Elizabeth was pleased to hear this, because she knew it would give her father pleasure to learn that the neglect he experienced from so near a relation was not owing to want of affection.

In reply to her wishing to see the ancient seat of her forefathers, Mrs. M'Tulloch assured her, if an opportunity for gratifying her curiosity occurred whilst she remained at Black Crag, she should be apprised of it. After a little further conversation she took her leave, but not without begging permission to repeat her visit.

Elizabeth's chamber opened into a closet, which by a flight of steps communicated with a green-house, opening in a retired garden. The day was a lovely one, and, as soon as she was left to herself, she repaired thither.

As she was slowly pacing a shady path, absorbed in the reflections her recent visitor had inspired, she was startled on a sudden, by beholding Ruthven at her side.

Perceiving her emotion, 'I fear I have alarmed you,' he cried, smiling.

'No,' answered Elizabeth, recovering herself, 'only surprised me a little, as I supposed you had joined some one of the parties that were formed at breakfast.'

'What,' in a tone of tender reproach, 'after hearing you avow your determination not to do so.'

Elizabeth, thinking these merely words of course, only laughed.

After a little conversation.... 'There is a beautiful and romantic spot,' said he, 'a little distance from this, which, I think, you would be highly delighted with.... will you permit me to be your guide to it?'

Elizabeth made no objection....being a married man, and so near a relation of Mrs. Dunbar, inducing her to believe there was no impropriety in acceding to his request.

They accordingly quitted the garden, by means of a wicket at its extremity, and sweeping round some noble plantations, entered upon a shelving path, bounded on each side by high shrubby banks, in many places overtopped by clustering elders and hollies. The balmy sweetness which the wild plants and flowers that bespread these banks gave to the air, the melodious caroling of the birds that filled their brakes, and the incessant humming of the busy insects that swarmed the adjacent shades, rendered this walk delightful. After proceeding some distance, the banks suddenly cleared away on one side, and disclosed to view a beautiful river, just where a ridge of rocks impeded the current, and produced a most picturesque waterfall. Across these rocks was a passage to the opposite side, where on the top of a steep cliff stood a beautiful fancy cottage, shaded in the rear by a complete grove of lilac, inclosed within a light white

paling, which added much to the rustic appearance of the place. The summit of the cliff was covered with the finest verdure, and tufted with shrubs, interspersed with knots and flowers, myrtles, geraniums, and all such exotics, as during the heat of summer can bear the open air. The descent was rendered easy by flights of steps cut in the rock in various directions, and here and there deviating into little wildernesses, in which seats were placed for repose and recreation. At the base, and close to the water's edge, stood a small octagon temple, commanding most extensive views on either side of the river.

In this little rustic villa, which owed its existence entirely to the taste of Mrs. Dunbar, Ruthven informed Elizabeth she frequently entertained her friends with picnic dinners and rural balls.

Elizabeth was too much charmed to resist his importunities to take a nearer view of it; they crossed over, and on gaining the summit, Ruthven threw up one of the windows, which were all fine plate glass, extending from the ceiling to the ground, and answering the double purpose of doors and windows, and admitted his fair companion into a spacious room, but fitted up with a simplicity that made it perfectly accord with the exterior of the building. The floor was covered with India matting; the chairs, of cane, were exactly in the cottage style; a dresser, of snowy hue, was furnished with a variety of curious Tunbridge ware; the walls, of a greyish colour, were hung with a variety of prints, chiefly taken from the Seasons of Thomson; and the windows ornamented with a drapery of brown silk netting, in imitation of that made for the preservation of fruit. This apartment opened into a smaller one, called the tea room, and furnished in rather a more showy manner; the window-curtains and chair-covers, of slate coloured calico, were edged with a deep border of roses; the rustic mantelpiece was decorated with a variety of fine old china; and the walls instead of being adorned with pictures, were painted in imitation of trellis-work, with natural shrubs and flowers breaking through.

Elizabeth was in raptures with all she saw; and Ruthven professed himself equally delighted, at having been

the means of affording her so much pleasure. While she was looking about her he slipped away, but shortly returned with a basket of strawberries and bowl of cream, which he had procured from an old woman, who with her husband occupied the back part of the cottage, in order to take care of it.

Elizabeth, still imputing his conduct to her to benevolent motives....to his perceiving the neglect she experienced from others, and wishing to do something which should prevent her feeling it sensibly....received his attentions with a sweetness and pleasure, which still further strengthened his hopes of having already made a favourable impression on her mind.

This idea, united to the tempting opportunity he had for revealing his sentiments, emboldened him by degrees to betray them. At first Elizabeth treated as a jest what he said to her; but by degrees the encreasing warmth of his language, his still more impassioned glances, and some liberties he attempted to take, made her drop her rallying manner, and determine on leaving him immediately; but, on her making an effort to quit the seat in the inner room, with a kind of gentle violence he detained her.

‘Mr. Ruthven,’ cried Elizabeth, as she struggled to free herself from him, ‘I....I insist (almost panting with anger and alarm) on your instantly releasing me. Do not, by persevering in this audacious conduct, make me repent having formed a better opinion of you than you deserve.’

‘If I have been so fortunate,’ returned he, in a most insidious tone, but still preventing her quitting her seat, ‘to inspire you with a good opinion, surely my only yielding to the feelings inspired by your resistless charms....to the impulse of adoration, of admiration, cannot....or rather ought not, to rob me of it :...come, my adorable girl, do not look upon me with such an indignant aspect....believe me, you could not find a more grateful admirer than I shall be.’

‘This language, Sir, is as unbecoming your situation, as it is insulting to me.’

‘ And why unbecoming? nothing can be unbecoming that is not unnatural; and surely it cannot be reckoned unnatural for a young fellow like me to speak of love to a beautiful woman.’

‘ And why! what a question,’ repeated Elizabeth; ‘ is it for you, a married man, to speak in such a manner?’

‘ A married man! my dear angel (with the most libertine air imaginable :) who, for heaven’s sake, do you think would ever marry, if they did not suppose they would still continue at liberty to follow their own inclinations? true, I am married, but matrimony has neither destroyed my taste for beauty or pleasure; in short, to come to the point at once....for I am no hypocrite, and, besides, consider life too short and precarious for any of its precious moments to be wasted in reserves and scruples....I adore you; and if you will turn a propitious ear to my vows, swear to you, that all I command, which, thank my stars, is sufficient to satisfy any woman at all reasonable in her wishes, shall henceforth be at your disposal.’

‘ Away!’ cried Elizabeth, with an indignation that agitated her whole frame. ‘ That you have strangely misconceived my character, I must suppose, or that you would never have insulted me in the manner you have done; but this is no extenuation of your conduct, since, out of respect to Mrs. Dunbar, I should, as her guest, have been treated very differently. Unhand me this moment, Sir, or you will oblige me to expose your conduct, which, on her account, I wish to bury in oblivion, by calling to the servants.’

‘ My angel, to prevent your fatiguing yourself with such an exertion, know that the good dame and her husband are gone out into the neighbouring fields, so that neither obtrusive eye, nor listening ear, need we dread.’ As he spoke, he attempted again to strain her to his breast.

‘ Listen to me, Mr. Ruthven,’ cried Elizabeth, endeavouring to check the terror his conduct inspired, emphatically laying one hand on his arm, and with the other parrying off the efforts he made to kiss her.

What further she intended to say was prevented by the sudden opening of the door communicating with the two apartments, and the entrance of Mrs. Ruthven and her unfaithful friend.

By persuasions of Miss Rae, she had followed them to the cottage, judging of others by herself, as the depraved heart is ever apt to do. Miss Rae, on Elizabeth's declining to join any of the parties at breakfast, immediately conceived a suspicion that it was owing to some agreement between her and Ruthven....a suspicion in which she was confirmed, when, in consequence of having staid at home to watch their motions, she beheld them quitting the garden together. She directly hastened to Mrs. Ruthven, who, owing to Delacour's having excused himself from riding with her, had also, in a fit of sullenness, refused going out; and informed her, if ever she hoped to make a discovery, that might excuse the step she meditated, now was her time, information which quickly induced Mrs. Ruthven to oblige her. There was another, though more circuitous, way to the cottage, than the one Ruthven and Elizabeth had taken, and this they pursued, to surprise them, as above related.

Ruthven started up on the entrance of the unwelcome intruders, and his example was followed by Elizabeth, but neither attempted to speak; anger tied the tongue of one, and confusion that of the other.

'Upon my word, a charming spot this for the perusal of a tender tale, so quiet, and so romantic,' said Mrs. Ruthven, after enjoying for a few minutes, in malicious silence, the evident distress of Elizabeth.

'Or for the disclosure of one,' added Miss Rae, still more maliciously, and glancing her flashing eyes at Ruthven.

'What a delightful thing is a good invention!' rejoined Mrs. Ruthven: 'who could have suspected that some people (and, with a supercilious smile, she directed the eyes of Miss Rae to Elizabeth) had other motives for staying at home this morning than the ones they avowed!'

'Smooth water runs deep,' replied the elegant and gentle Miss Rae.

‘Yes, so I now find; but we intrude....come, my dear,’ taking her arm, ‘let us be gone....studious people, like Miss Munro,’ smiling ironically, ‘don’t like to be broken in upon.’

Miss Rae hesitated about retiring, but finding Mrs. Ruthven was determined, and fearful, from the turn of his countenance, if she shewed any inclination to remain behind, Ruthven would betray her to his wife, and thus occasion the complete frustration of every scheme she had formed, she forced herself to refrain making any objection to the proposal.

On their leaving the room, Elizabeth recovered the faculties which the shock she had received from their unexpected appearance, or rather conduct to her, had suspended, and attempted to fly after them, but was prevented by Ruthven’s catching her robe.

‘For heaven’s sake, my angel,’ cried he, perfectly recovered from his recent surprise, being hardened to care either what his wife, or any other person, might say concerning him, ‘what are you about?’

‘Let me go....let me go,’ exclaimed Elizabeth wildly, and struggling with him; ‘or, if you wish me to forgive your conduct, wish me to believe you not lost to every feeling of honour and humanity, hasten after your wife yourself, and exculpate me from the suspicions ’tis plain she entertains.’

‘My lovely girl, think no more of her....envy, pure envy alone, caused her to say what she did; she and her companion are two of the most malicious creatures in the universe, and you cannot gratify them more than by suffering them to believe you mind them; only reflect, if they were not, could the simple circumstance of seeing us seated here, which was all they saw, have induced them to act as they have done?’

‘Wretch!’ exclaimed Elizabeth, bursting from his grasp, and escaping from the room, almost maddened at the thoughts of the irreparable injury her character might sustain, if it was known that she continued another minute with him after what had past.

Ruthven pursued her till she gained the passage across the water, when he paused, lest otherwise her safety might be endangered.

On reaching her chamber, which, owing to her swiftness, she did without further molestation from him, her first impulse was to seek out Mrs. Ruthven immediately, for the purpose of clearing herself in her opinion; but when she came to reflect on the consequences that might ensue from such a measure, that she could not justify herself without villifying Ruthven, and thus, perhaps, occasioning an eternal breach between them, she relinquished it altogether, trusting her subsequent conduct would remove any unfavourable ideas that might at present be entertained of her.

It may here, perhaps, be remarked, that the most prudent step she could have taken, would have been to have quitted Black Crag immediately. Of this she was well aware, and accordingly would not have delayed her departure, but for a letter received from her father that morning, acquainting her that he and her mother were gone on a little excursion for a week or a fortnight from Heathwood....information which, owing to the terror she was under of Lord O'Sinister, rendered her unwilling to proceed thither, till apprised of their return. The instant she heard of that, she resolved on bidding adieu to Black Crag; and even sooner, if she found she could not awe Ruthven into decorum, or had any reason to imagine that her protracted stay gave uneasiness to his lady, or that she had injured her in the estimation of Mrs. Dunbar.

She shuddered, when she reflected on the lengths to which jealousy and misconception often lead people, and could only alleviate the anguish the idea gave her, by deciding on coming to a candid explanation with Mrs. Dunbar respecting the conduct of her nephew, should she have any grounds for believing she had been misrepresented to her by his wife.

With mingled horror and astonishment she revolved his conduct, the vile and ungenerous advantage he had taken of her confidence in his honour to inveigle her into solitude. That he was a hardened libertine she could not doubt; and who knows, thought she, but that to a consciousness of his being so....to a mind soured by disappointment and suspicion....may be owing the asperity, and seeming malevolence of his lady. 'Oh, if I thought

so,' she cried with energy, 'how readily could I...how readily would I excuse whatever appears unamiable in her disposition, since I can easily picture to myself (and for an instant her thoughts rested on Delacour) what a heart of the least sensibility must feel, at finding itself deceived by the object of its love and confidence, compelled to lead a life of jealousy....' To follow still the changes of the moon with fresh surmises.' To such a state how preferable....how infinitely preferable, that of

' the barren sister,
' Chaunting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.'

Solely engrossed by the recent incidents, she thought not of dressing till a late hour; in consequence of which she received a summons to dinner ere her toilet was completed.

Distressed and confused, at the idea of occasioning the company to wait for her, she hurried over the rest of her dress, and, with trembling steps, repaired to the drawing-room, scarcely able to make the apology she deemed necessary to Mrs. Dunbar. In reply to this.... 'Oh, pray say no more on the subject, my dear,' said this lady; 'when people are agreeably engaged, I know they are apt to forget how time passes.'

Elizabeth looked earnestly at Mrs. Dunbar, and almost started, for she fancied these words were uttered with an ironical air. She quickly, however, endeavoured to subdue her feelings, and resolved not to be too precipitate in giving way to the apprehensions this idea excited.

To her unspeakable indignation Ruthven made an effort to take her hand to lead her to the eating-room. With a look expressive of the feelings he had inspired, she shrunk from him, and contrived, though not without some difficulty, to get a chair at a distance from his; but which, like the one she occupied the preceding day at table, was exactly opposite Delacour's.

Thus situated, it was impossible to prevent their eyes continually meeting; and, with a sensation of surprise, Elizabeth still read, in the dark expressive ones of Delacour, a language very different from that of indifference.

She would not suffer herself, however, to dwell upon this pleasing idea ; his cold constrained air towards her plainly evinced his wishing her to believe he felt nothing more for her ; and she accordingly determined to force herself to think so.

Malicious and disdainful as were the looks with which she was regarded the preceding day by Mrs. Ruthven and Miss Rae, they were tender and complacent, compared to those she now received from them.

But not sufficiently gratified by giving her silent indications of their hatred, they began to speak at her in a manner that crimsoned her cheeks with the blushes of shame and indignation, and would completely have overwhelmed her, but that, as from time to time she cast a timid glance round the table, she had the happiness of perceiving none of the party but Ruthven appeared to understand them.

Their conversation was a little diverted from her at length, by Lady Lochness enquiring whether they had yet begun to make preparations for the approaching entertainment at Glengary ? To which, replying in the negative.... ' Come, Grant,' added she, slapping him familiarly on the shoulder as he sat beside her, ' I know you to have a good invention, so do help us to a few good characters.'

' What, for the purpose of cutting up, as is your custom, when any fall in your way ?'

' No, you wretch, but for the masquerade : I want to go in one that won't easily be found out.'

' Then you must go in one not at all like your own.'

' And I too,' cried Hume, ' I wish to do the same, for of all things (most affectedly) I like a character that's not easily developed.'

' Yes....by a strange perverseness, we often like that which is most opposite to our own.'

' Indeed ! you think then (still in an affected accent) that I am easily read.'

' Yes....with more ease than pleasure.'

' How vastly polite ! but you improve....yes, you improve daily.'

‘I am concerned truth will not allow me to return the compliment.’

‘Don’t mind him, Hume,’ said her Ladyship; ‘he only serves you as he does every one else; he really grows such a savage, I shan’t be surprised soon to hear of his digging a cave, and retiring to it like another Timon.’

‘Since so devilish fond of correcting, why don’t you,’ cried Ruthven, ‘turn your eyes inward, as Hamlet says?’

‘Because I should see there greater compassion for the vices and follies of mankind that they merit.’

‘Come, come, a truce with these vices and follies,’ said Mrs. Ruthven, a little impatiently, ‘and let us return to the masquerade, as a much more delightful theme; what a charming taste does Mrs. Munro display in the entertainments she contrives for the amusement of her friends! but really altogether, (and she looked spitefully at Elizabeth) she is a most delightful woman, and, if ever she quits this neighbourhood, we’ll all have to complain of a serious loss; but I trust there is no chance whatever of her doing so; I hope Mr. Munro has done justice to her merits, (and again she glanced at Elizabeth,) by securing the whole of his property to her.’

This speech was too evidently aimed at Elizabeth not to occasion every eye to be turned on her. The emotions it excited, united to the embarrassment caused by this general observation, nearly overpowered her; her head drooped upon her bosom, and a scalding tear of indignation dropped upon her varying cheek.

Delacour, who till the present moment had been nearly silent, and apparently uninterested in what was going forward, now seemed hardly able to command his feelings.

‘In such a hope,’ exclaimed he, with the greatest warmth, and turning his eyes flashing with anger and scorn full upon Mrs. Ruthven, ‘I am persuaded, Madam, you’ll find but few persons, if any, to join you.’

‘Indeed, Sir! and pray why so?’ turning pale with rage at the look with which he regarded her.

‘Why so? Oh Madam, (with contemptuous indignation,) what a question! excuse me for entreating you to recollect yourself.’

‘No, Sir,’ every feature swelling with passion, ‘tis you that require to recollect yourself; I could not have supposed that you would have spoken in the manner you have just done,’

‘Then, Madam,’ bowing to her, with a sarcastic smile, ‘we have equally surprised each other.’

‘Come, come,’ interposed Mrs. Dunbar, ‘as lady president, I desire a new subject may be started; come, Mr. Grant, a song or a sentiment’ (the cloth was by this time removed.)

‘With all my heart, Madam, the latter....May innocence,’ and his eye glanced at Elizabeth, ‘never want a friend, nor malice,’ and he turned towards Mrs. Ruthven, but as if involuntarily ‘an enemy.’

The warmth with which Delacour had resented a speech so wounding to her feelings, would have given birth to the most delightful sensations in the bosom of Elizabeth, but that she could not help thinking, from the coldness and reserve with which he now treated her, that humanity was his sole motive for having done so.

The whole party quitted the table pretty much about the same time, and repaired to a spacious gallery, the grand rendezvous of the family in general, and furnished at one end with billiard-tables, and at the other with musical instruments. Round the former all the party but Elizabeth, and such as preferred cards in an adjacent room with Mrs. Dunbar, immediately collected, the gentlemen to play, and the ladies to bet.

Elizabeth, alike neglected by all, for Ruthven had stationed himself at a billiard-table, seated herself in a remote window, commanding a full view of the sea, now tinged with the most vivid hues by the setting sun, as were also the stupendous cliffs that extended in a wild series along the coast....the haunts of gannats, shags, grey gulls, kittiwaks, razor-bills, and guillamots.

This scenery, so wild, yet magnificent, together with the monotonous sound of the waves breaking on the rocky shore; and the plaintive cries of the birds, now beginning to repair to their nests, gradually inspired a tender melancholy, soothing to the agitated feelings of the harressed Elizabeth. She became by degrees so com-

pletely absorbed in it, that she could not forbear starting, on feeling her arm touched by the tea-tray, which a servant had brought her.

Whilst helping herself, Ruthven also approached, and took a cup of coffee. 'For I must,' said he, giving her a look expressive of his libertine wishes, 'have the happiness of being helped off of the same board with Miss Munro.'

'Wretch!' inwardly exclaimed Elizabeth, averting her face with unaffected disdain from him.

'Now why so cruelly coy?' cried he, seating himself with an air of the greatest assurance on the window-seat beside her; 'upon my soul, you'll quite annihilate my happiness, if you persist in being so.'

'Coy!' repeated Elizabeth, with the greatest indignation, and involuntarily raising and turning her eyes, sparkling with anger and scorn on him. 'Good heavens, Sir, how can you have the audacity to speak to me again in such a manner?'

Without the least alteration of countenance, he was about replying to her, when a summons to the billiard-table, where the game he had begun was not yet finished, prevented him.

The train of reflections he had interrupted were too cruelly disturbed by his effrontery to be renewed. Shocked and disgusted, Elizabeth turned from the objects that had awakened them, in order to be on her guard in case he again attempted to join her. Soon after, a number of additional visitors entered; and with these some musicians, whom Mrs. Dunbar kept in constant pay, made their appearance; and arrangements for dancing immediately commenced.

Elizabeth, however, moved not until she at length saw Ruthven again approaching her; she instantly vacated her seat; but her effort to avoid him was fruitless....he suddenly threw himself before her, and, catching her hand, would have led her to the set, but that she forcibly drew back....'What! don't you dance?' demanded he, with the most impenetrable assurance.

'Not with you, Sir, assuredly,' replied Elizabeth with all the haughtiness she could assume, and struggling to free her hand.

‘Then by heavens you dance with no other person to-night,’ cried he spitefully, not a little piqued by her manner, relinquishing her hand as he spoke, and throwing himself full length upon a sofa, in order to watch at his ease her motions.

Elizabeth retired to as great a distance as she could from him, and also kept away from the rest of the party as much as possible, lest otherwise it might be surmised she wished to obtrude herself upon their notice, which they appeared quite as little inclined to bestow upon her this evening, as they had done the preceding one.

Dancing, however, had scarcely commenced, when a young gentleman, who had but lately entered the room, approached her seat, and begged the honour of her hand. She was on the point of granting his request, when Ruthven, who, in consequence of seeing him approach her, had darted to her side, whispered in her ear, but in a voice too low to permit what he said to be distinguished by any one else, ‘Remember my declaration ; by heavens, if you give your hand to that puppy, I’ll tear it from him, and then kick him from the room.’

Apprehensive of his doing what he threatened, and trembling at the bare suggestion of a disturbance on her account, Elizabeth immediately declined dancing though not without the greatest reluctance, so much was she vexed at the thoughts of doing any thing that could gratify him.

‘What ! not dance, my dear,’ said Mrs. Dunbar, in a tone of surprise, and who, having left cards for a few minutes, in order to take a survey of the dancers, was now at her elbow.

‘No, Ma’am,’ timidly, as well as hesitatingly, said Elizabeth, ‘I....I have got a head-ache, that....’

‘Oh, my dear, ’tis not necessary for you to make any excuse to me on the subject ; I always wish people to follow their own inclination.’

‘Then, I believe, Ma’am,’ returned Elizabeth, who clearly saw that she should not else be able to free herself from the persecutions of Ruthven, ‘since you are so good, I shall retire to my room.’

‘As you please,’ was the reply, but delivered, Elizabeth fancied, with a cold constrained air, ‘as I have already told you, ’tis my wish that my guests should always feel themselves at home.’

With a slight bow she then left her, accompanied by the gentleman she had been compelled to refuse.

‘Why surely,’ cried Ruthven, who continued by her side, the moment they were left by themselves, ‘you can’t be serious in thinking of going immediately to your room?’

Elizabeth turned from him without replying, and instantly retired.

She found her chamber illuminated by the pale and silvery beams of the moon, already risen high in the firmament; its mild light was too pleasing to her to permit her to think of calling for candles directly; she seated herself in an open window fronting the sea, and as she contemplated, with that admiration it was so well calculated to inspire, the shadowy scene without, rendered still more impressive by the sound of ocean’s heaving wave, and the wailing of the owl from the grass-fringed battlements of the castle, again felt the perturbation of her spirits subsiding, and involuntarily thought, as she felt its tranquillizing power, how much kinder Nature is to mankind than in general they are to themselves, since in the scenes she furnishes for their recreation, unlike those they too often contrive for themselves for that purpose, nothing is ever found that can give rise to unpleasant reflections, or debase their minds. ‘Oh, never,’ cried Elizabeth, as she pursued this reflection, ‘may I suffer myself to be led into any pursuits that can destroy my taste for her sublime works, or prevent my gazing on those spangled heavens, with the sweet, the extatic, the holy hope, of yet becoming a bright inhabitant of them.’

But the quietness she so much needed she was not suffered long to enjoy. She had not been above half an hour in her chamber, when her meditations were suddenly interrupted by the creaking of the closet door, and instantly after perceiving a man advancing from it: that the intruder was Ruthven she could not doubt, and with

a shriek of terror she started up, and sprang towards the door leading into the dressing-room. Ruthven, however, for it was him, was too quick for her ; he gained it before her, and turning the key, took it out, and then hastening back to the opposite door, did the same.

Elizabeth, on finding her escape thus prevented, made towards the bell ; but was hindered reaching it by Ruthven's catching her in his arms.

' Villain ! monster ! ' exclaimed she, as almost breathless with terror and indignation, she struggled to burst from his grasp, ' are you then lost to every feeling of shame and honour ? '

' To all but love, ' cried he, straining her still more closely to his bosom.

Unable to disengage herself from him, and too well apprised of the remote situation of her chamber to hope the exertion of her voice would obtain her any assistance, terror now completely overpowered Elizabeth. The dropping of her head upon his shoulder, and the cold dampness of her lips, against which he audaciously pressed his, apprised Ruthven of the state to which he had reduced her ; he bore her to the window, where by degrees the air revived her. But just as she was regaining her faculties, they were again suspended, by suddenly hearing herself called upon by Mrs. Ruthven from the dressing-room, and Miss Rae from the closet, to admit them immediately into her chamber.

On missing her and Ruthven from the gallery, who, bold and presumptuous as he was deceptive and designing, had suddenly conceived the project of following her to her chamber, it occurred to them, that they had retired for the purpose of renewing the *tête-a-tête* which had been interrupted in the morning ; and no sooner had this thought struck them, than they decided on besetting her, as above described, in order to prevent the escape of Ruthven, whom his wife had now a double motive for wishing to surprise with her : the warmth with which Delacour had noticed the efforts she made at dinner-time to wound her feelings having stung her to the quick, and added jealousy to her other causes of dislike towards her

'Oh! good heavens, I am lost....irretrievably ruined!' cried Elizabeth, in a low voice, wringing her hands.

'Compose yourself, my angel,' said Ruthven, whisperingly, 'and nothing that you apprehend will ensue; the projection beneath this window, permit me to make my escape by it, and thus disappoint the malice of those two fiends, whom the devil confound.'

Then returning her the keys of the respective doors, and snatching a hasty kiss, he stepped out, and in a few minutes reached the ground in safety.

In the meanwhile the two ladies kept thundering for admission.

'Open the door, I say, Miss Munro,' vociferated Mrs. Ruthven, 'immediately, or I'll call up the servants to break it open.'

'If you keep me another minute here,' almost screamed the enraged Miss Rae, 'depend upon it, Miss Munro, you shall have cause for repentance.'

At length they were admitted by the trembling Elizabeth.

CHAP. VIII.

'Her look was so artless, her accent so mild,
Her candour so sweetly express'd,
I gaz'd on her beauties, as blushing she smil'd,
And clasp'd the lov'd maid to my breast...
The primrose in clusters breath'd fragrance around,
And witness'd the vows that were given;
The lark that sat listening soar'd swift from the ground,
And warbled the contract in heaven.'

MACNIELL'S POEMS.

'FINE doings there must have been carrying on in this chamber, to have it barricaded in such a manner,' cried Mrs. Ruthven the moment she gained admission, glancing eagerly round it as she spoke, in hopes of espying Ruthven.

'No doubt,' rejoined Miss Rae, also looking about, and then running to the bed, to try whether Ruthven was not concealed behind the curtains.

'Pray, Madam,' with a bullying air, demanded Mrs. Ruthven, enraged beyond expression at not finding her husband, as she expected, what reason can you assign for locking yourself up in such a manner?'

'I deem it quite unnecessary to assign any, Madam,' returned Elizabeth haughtily, her spirit proudly rising at this contumelious treatment.

'Because you have no good one to give.'

'Whatever was the cause this intrusion proves, I was but right in doing so.'

'You insolent little hussey, is it by impertinence to her relation you manifest your gratitude to Mrs. Dunbar, for permitting you to come under her roof.'

'In reply, permit me to ask you, Madam, whether it is by insulting her guest you evince your respect for her?'

'Insulting!....insulting!' in accents of fury; 'why, if I did insult you, have you not given me cause?....have you not wounded me in the tenderest point?....have you not alienated the affections of my husband from me through your artifices?....are you not now carrying on a shameful....?'

'Hold, Madam, !...hold!' cried Elizabeth, with still greater vivacity, 'for your own sake, as well as mine, I caution you to silence, for be assured I am neither so destitute of spirit, or of friends, as to allow my character to be attacked with impunity.'

'Monstrous! I protest,' exclaimed Miss Rae, perceiving Mrs. Ruthven appeared somewhat awed by this speech, 'I never heard such assurance; if I was you, my dear friend, I'd instantly go to Mrs. Dunbar, and make it a point that she should be turned from the house.'

'Tis quite unnecessary, Madam,' replied Elizabeth, with a look of ineffable scorn, 'for her to take that trouble, for after what has just passed, nothing should tempt me to prolong my stay in it.'

'Oh yes....you mean to leave it, to be sure,' cried Mrs. Ruthven, sneeringly; 'but come, my dear,' taking the arm of her confidant, 'let us leave her to her agreea-

ble reflections, for her assurance really agitates me in a way that cannot but be injurious to me.'

'The time will yet arrive, I make no doubt, Madam,' said Elizabeth, 'in which you'll be convinced I merited not such treatment from you.'

The moment she found herself alone she rung for lights; as soon as they were brought, and the servant dismissed, she carefully locked the closet door, and then repaired to the dressing-room, with a determination of passing the night there, her mind being too disturbed, and her apprehensions of Ruthven too great, to permit her to think of retiring to repose.

Never, indeed, had she been so shocked, as by the cruel suspicions it was but too evident Mrs. Ruthven entertained of her. The hope, however she indulged of her departure the following morning from Black Crag removing those entirely, was some little mitigation of the anguish which they now gave her.

She shuddered, and was truly grateful to heaven, when she revolved the narrow escape her character had; for had Ruthven been detected in her chamber, she felt almost convinced, from the violence and malignancy of his lady and her friend, that she should vainly have attempted its justification.

That women brought up in the manner in which she took it for granted they were, should yield to such degrading violence of temper, was a matter of astonishment to her.

'Of what avail is education,' cried she, 'if it does not teach us to subdue ourselves....of what avail its boasted advantages, if it does not enable us to resist the tyranny of our feelings, since, in the moment of passion, there is no more difference between the elegant and vulgar mind, than there is between the cultivated plain, and steril rock when inundated by the sea.'

The consolation which the idea of being speedily restored to the tranquillity of her own beloved home was so well calculated to afford her, the apprehension she was under of Lord O'Sinister being now at Firgrove, rendered her incapable of feeling. She tried to hope, however that, by unremitting vigilance on her side, she should be

enabled to prevent his taking any advantage of her return to Heathwood during the absence of her father.

For some time she meditated seeking an immediate interview with Mrs. Dunbar; but at length the reflection, that Mrs. Ruthven might not after all touch upon the occurrences of the day to her, determined her also on silence respecting them, except she had reason to believe, from the conduct of Mrs. Dunbar, that they had been mentioned to her prejudice.

After a watchful and most uncomfortable night, she threw herself upon the bed in a wrapper, just as day-light was beginning to dawn through the window-shutters; but though fatigued in the extreme, the discomposure of her mind was too great to allow of her enjoying much rest. At an earlier hour than usual she arose, and was dressing herself, when Mrs. M'Tulloch entered her chamber to pay her respects, and enquire after the Captain, as she still continued to call Munro, of whose wound Elizabeth had informed her.

After Elizabeth had answered this enquiry, and mentioned the excursion on which her parents were gone, the housekeeper proceeded to say, that, in the course of the ensuing week, she hoped to have an opportunity of shewing her the interior of Glengary.

Elizabeth thanked her for the kind solicitude she manifested to gratify her wishes, but added with a sigh, she was about quitting Black Crag that day.

'What! and the dear Captain and your mamma from home!' said Mrs. M'Tulloch, in accents indicative of surprise.

'Yes,' answered Elizabeth, in a languid tone, her sleepless night, and the dreadful agitation she had experienced, having completely sunk her spirits.

'Why sure,' cried Mrs. M'Tulloch, after looking earnestly in her face for a minute.... 'sure it can't be possible that Mrs. Dunbar has done any thing to affront you?'

'Oh, no,' eagerly replied Elizabeth, 'Mrs. Dunbar,' and unconsciously she laid an emphasis on the word, 'has done nothing to offend me.'

'But some one else has,' with quickness rejoined the housekeeper; 'yes, yes, I see plain enough by your looks

that you are vexed ; and I think 'tis quite as great a shame for Mrs. Dunbar to let you be affronted under her roof, as if she had done so herself.'

'She's not to blame....she had nothing to say to the affair,' cried Elizabeth ; ' if her niece bore any resemblance to her....'

'Her niece!' interrupted Mrs. M'Tulloch, ' so it is she who has vexed you in this manner, and caused you to think of going away in such a hurry !'

Elizabeth, finding she had gone too far to recede, frankly related, but not without a flood of tears, occasioned by the depression of her spirits, to Mrs. M'Tulloch, on whose prudence and secrecy she was well aware she might safely rely, all that had happened to her at Black Crag, as well as the circumstance to which her introduction to it was owing.

The housekeeper was all astonishment and indignation at her recital.

'Here's a young villain for you, as well as an old one!' she exclaimed ; ' a pretty scape-grace Mrs. Dunbar has got for a nephew, but heaven knows good enough for the minx he's married to. Ah, I wish to the Lord some folks I know had caught him in your chamber, they'd have put a stop to his pranks for a while at least ; but, my darling, you musn't think of going home till you are certain the dear Captain is there, lest that big rogue of a Lord, the devil run away with him....God forgive me for saying such a wicked thing, but 'tis enough to make one mad to hear of such old fellows as he running after the girls....should take it into his head to contrive another scheme for getting you into his power. No....no that would be like getting out of the frying-pan into the fire.'

'What am I to do then,' asked Elizabeth anxiously, ' for to continue any longer here is utterly impossible ?'

'Yes, yes, I know that well enough ; but I'll tell you.... you shall come to Glengary with me, where I have apartments of my own, into which no one can enter without my permission, and where you'll be as snug and as easy as you can wish.'

‘ Could I do so without the knowledge of Mrs. Dunbar, I would embrace your proposal with as much pleasure as gratitude.’

‘ Nothing easier....do you only tell her you have received a letter from home, which makes you anxious to return there directly, and, instead of accepting her carriage for the whole journey, which of course she’ll offer, merely take it to the first stage, where I’ll meet you, and, as I am very intimate with the people of the inn there, be able to manage matters in such a way that no one shall discover more than you wish to have known.,

To this arrangement Elizabeth made no objection; and being anxious to depart as soon as possible, she left to Mrs. M’Tulloch, who volunteered her services, the employment of packing up her things, whilst she repaired to the dressing-room of Mrs. Dunbar, to announce her intention of quitting Black Crag immediately.

The hour was earlier than she imagined, and instead of finding Mrs. Dunbar in the apartment she only found her woman, who informed her, her lady was not yet up, but she expected she would be in a few minutes.

This apartment opened to a noble terrace extending to the cliffs; and hither, Elizabeth now bent her steps, to await a summons to Mrs. Dunbar.

‘ The freshness of the morning air,
Which nimbly and sweetly here
Did recommend itself unto the gentle senses,’

was truly delightful to her after the fatiguing night she had passed. She strolled on till she came to the cliff that terminated it; here she paused, and leaning against a fragment of the rock, as her admiring eyes wandering over the restless surface of the deep, glittering in the expanding sun-beams, and traced the faint outline of some of the romantic islands of the Hebrides in the distant horizon,

‘ Like clouds
Blue floating on the verge of ev’ning skies,’

her heart, notwithstanding the disquietude that pervaded it at the moment, experienced a sensation of rapture,

such as the sublime and varied works of Nature never fail of awakening in a mind of taste and genius, a heart of piety and feeling.

On a sudden the sound of voices on the beach made her advance nearer to the edge of the cliff; and looking over, she beheld at anchor beneath it a beautifully-decorated vessel, into which several of the servants of Mrs. Dunbar were busied in assisting the sailors to convey baskets of provisions, a circumstance which gave Elizabeth to understand that a party of pleasure was at hand. As she drew back, and was retracing her way to the house, a quick footstep behind her caused her again to glance round, and she saw Delacour. She started, but instantly recollecting herself, moved on, as if she had not perceived him. The agitation which she thus tried to conceal was quickly rendered more violent by his joining her. After the usual salutations of the morning.... 'By your being up so early, Miss Munro,' said he, with something like the air with which he had formerly addressed her, 'I am inclined to hope you intend being one of our party to-day on the water.' Elizabeth slightly bowed....

'No, Sir,' with forced coldness, she replied 'I have no such intention.'

'Indeed !...well, I am sorry to hear you say so, though, if wise, I should rather rejoice, since the more I see of Miss Munro, the more I must regret the' He paused, but only for an instant....the involuntary look of surprise he caught at the moment from Elizabeth caused him to proceed.

'Ah, why....why,' in the most impassioned accents, he cried....'why so cruelly disappoint me ?....why raise expectations you never meant to realize ?....why not at once ingenuously confess the request I made was disagreeable?'

'The request !' repeated Elizabeth involuntarily, and with a bewildered look ; 'I know not what you mean.... I know not what disappointment you allude to.'

'Why surely you cannot forget your having granted me permission to visit you.'

'Assuredly not.'

‘Then surely you cannot be ignorant that the disappointment I allude to, was being denied admission after having obtained that permission.’

‘I never heard that you called upon me,’ returned Elizabeth, with forced calmness, and still an air of coldness.

‘Never heard that I waited on you the morning after I had the unexpected pleasure of meeting you in this neighbourhood!’

‘No, never.’

‘Gracious heaven!’ exclaimed Delacour, in a tone indicative of the greatest agitation, ‘are you really serious?....do you solemnly assure me you heard not of my visit?....desired me not to be informed that you could neither see me then or at any other time, and therefore begged I might not repeat it?’

‘Yes’ answered Elizabeth, with a total change of voice and manner, the cruel deception which had been practised on her relative to him by the vile Mrs. Elford, lest, through his means, she should have discovered the dangerous situation she was then in, now flashing full upon her mind, ‘yes, I do assure you all this....assure you I left no message for you....never heard of your visit... if I had....’

‘If you had,’ cried Delacour, in a transport, catching at these words....‘if you had....oh, say....say, dear Miss Munro....would you have refused it?’

‘Would I,’ almost unconsciously repeated Elizabeth, half raising her fine eyes to his.

‘Oh, transport!’ exclaimed the impassioned Delacour, snatching her hand and pressing his lips to it, ‘what a weight has not this explanation removed from my heart!....what delicious moments have I not lost, from its not sooner taking place, by yielding to the pride which forbade me ever thinking of it! In the pique and resentment of my heart, at your supposed ill usage, I vowed to maintain the most inflexible silence towards you... a vow which, but for the happy and unlooked-for meeting of this morning, I might, perhaps, have kept to my own eternal cost. Since you will not be of the boating party, would that I could disengage myself from it, that I might not lose another moment in pouring out at your feet the

fulness of my soul....revealing the feelings with which you have inspired me ; but as I cannot ~~be~~ engage myself from it, I shall endeavour to console myself by reflecting, that perhaps in the course of a few hours I shall have an opportunity of fully disclosing my hopes....my wishes !'

At this instant, Grant and Hume, who, like him, had been down to the beach to witness the preparations making for the party, and, like him, ascended the terrace by means of steps cut in the cliff, made their appearance ; upon which Elizabeth snatched away her hand, though most reluctantly, and hastened to the dressing-room of Mrs. Dunbar ; she found it empty, and from the emotion she was in at the moment, was pleased at the circumstance, since, till Delacour had fully explained himself, she wished no suspicion to be entertained of their attachment. Was it then reciprocal....was the indifference which had lately marked his conduct towards her but affected....the warmth, the tenderness it now manifested, real?...oh, yes....yes, the explanation that had just taken place permitted not a doubt of its being so to obtrude or rather linger on her mind.

Delightful thought !....but ah, how seldom is happiness unalloyed ! The transports of her heart were quickly damped by the idea of her approaching departure from Black Crag, and consequent separation from Delacour. Ah, what a moment was this to leave it, when he, for whom the secret sigh of her soul was breathed, had proved to her that that sigh had not been breathed in vain ! But she endeavoured to console herself, by reflecting that he was not chained to it....that if his sentiments for her were really such as he avowed, her quitting Black Crag at this crisis would not prevent his seeking another opportunity of recurring to the conversation of that morning.

The entrance of Mrs. Dunbar interrupted her reflections on the subject. Elizabeth delayed not acquainting her with the cause of her wishing to see her so early.

Mrs. Dunbar expressed surprise and regret at her determination, but attempted not to oppose it : as Mrs. M^r Fulloch had foreseen, she made her an offer of her travelling chaise, and also the attendance of her woman

to Heathwood.....Elizabeth positively declined the latter, and only accepted the former as far as the first stage, making a plausible excuse for not taking it the whole way.

Every thing being settled for her departure, she repaired to her chamber to acquaint Mrs. M'Tulloch; and on her departing, which she did almost immediately, in order to precede her to the inn, hastened back to the dressing-room of Mrs. Dunbar, where breakfast was served, at which Lady Lochness, who, like the mistress of the mansion, was not fond of aquatic excursions, joined them. By the time this repast was over, the chaise was ready for Elizabeth. On parting, Mrs. Dunbar again said something indicative of regret at the shortness of her visit, and charged her with her best wishes to her father.

On alighting at the appointed place she was ushered into a vacant apartment, where she continued by herself until the carriage of Mrs. Dunbar had driven off, when Mrs. M'Tulloch made her appearance; they did not, however, quit the house until it began to grow dark, when a chaise was prepared for them; they were set down at a lonely, and for some time past disused, lodge in the park, where the trunk of Elizabeth was deposited, and from whence they proceeded to the house.

A private door, of which Mrs. M'Tulloch had exclusively the key, gave them admission to the apartments she called her's, in one of the towers that flanked the building, consisting of a sitting-room and chamber, communicating with a spacious gallery, leading to the part of the mansion occupied by the principal personages belonging to it.

Here the housekeeper left Elizabeth, for a few minutes, for the purpose of procuring lights and tea. On her return, Elizabeth enquired whether the circumstance of her bringing these to this place would not be apt to create some unpleasant suspicion? To which enquiry she replied in the negative, adding, that as she was in the habit of often entertaining her acquaintances in the neighbourhood, nothing of the kind could excite surprise, or consequently suspicion.

In the course of the evening, Elizabeth, as she thought on her present situation, could not help reflecting on the strange vicissitudes of this life....how little her father, at one period of his, would have believed it possible that a child of his should be under the necessity of entering the mansion of his forefathers, without the knowledge of its possessors, and indebted to a domestic for an asylum in it!

The preparations now making at Glengary for the approaching entertainment frequently obliging Mrs. M'Tulloch to leave Elizabeth for long intervals by herself, she endeavoured to prevent her feeling the dreariness of solitude, by supplying her with entertaining, or, as she styled them, handsome books. Fond, however, as Elizabeth was of reading, the occupation of her thoughts at this crisis, by recent scenes and future prospects, would have made her prefer seeking amusement in rambling about the delightful grounds surrounding her, but for fear of being discovered by some one of the inhabitants of Black Crag, still in its vicinity, than which, the idea of being, nothing could be more terrific to her imagination, from the suspicious light in which she was well aware such a circumstance would make her appear....there would then, she was convinced, be no bounds to the malice of Mrs. Ruthven and her friend, nor any possibility of refuting their slanders against her.

Nothing short of this fear could have withheld her from obeying the ardent wish she felt, for exploring the scenes rendered interesting to her by the knowledge of their having been the favourite haunts of her father....

‘The scenes of his youth, when every charm could please.’

‘Ah! how little, in the gay morning of that youth,’ she more than once cried to herself, ‘did he imagine, that ere the evening of his days had well arrived, he should find himself an exile from the delightful shades amidst which it opened! Oh! if it be sharper than a serpent’s tooth to have a thankless child, surely it must be equally agonizing to have an unnatural parent.’

But, exclusive of the considerations which rendered them so interesting to her, she would, on account of

their romantic beauty, have been pleased to have felt herself at liberty to explore the green solitudes of Glen-gary.

A greater variety of enchanting scenery than its spacious park exhibited, could scarcely any where be seen....hill and dale, wood and water, were here inter-mixed in the happiest and most picturesque manner; through shrouding woods, the growth of centuries, views of the distant country were caught, and of 'the flat green sea,' with the islands that diversified it, dawning through the mist of distance: the grandeur of the building perfectly accorded with the magnificence of the scenery; of ancient date, it still retained the gothic appearance it had worn on its first erection, and was esteemed altogether one of the finest monuments then extant of the taste of former times, a building well calculated to revive the memory of other ages, to send the soul back to the days of old, when in its stately halls bards sung the exploits of the valiant, and on the clouds, on the wings of the wind, the dim ghosts were supposed to come from the place of their rest to hearken to the sound of their praise.

The exercise which apprehension prevented Elizabeth from taking without doors, she sometimes ventured to take in the gallery adjoining her apartments, as though it contained a suite of elegant chambers, these were never occupied, except when the house was crowded with visitors, which at present was not the case, nor expected to be, till within a day or two of the masquerade.

Here, at the closing hour of eve, when that soft and shadowy light alone prevailed within it, which,

'disarray'd

Of all its gorgeous robe, with blunted beams,
Thro' windows dim with holy acts pourtray'd,
Along some cloister'd abbey faintly gleams,
Abstracting the rapt thought from vain earth-musing dreams,'

she loved to wander, 'indulging all to thought;' or sometimes pausing at the folding doors at its extremity, to listen to the sounds that prevailed beyond it, which she could here plainly distinguish; and not unseldom did she catch those of

'Riot and ill-managed merriment'...

a circumstance, however, that did not surprise her, when she considered who was mistress of the revels.

On the very morning of the day fixed for the masquerade, Mrs. M'Tulloch brought her a letter from her father, left, like his perceding ones, at the post-office till called for, and which informed her of his and her mother's return to Heathwood....information that would have induced her to set out immediately, but that on enquiring she found it impossible to procure any kind of conveyance till the ensuing day, owing to the great demand for carriages, in consequence of the crowds that were coming to the masquerade.

Her curiosity excited by the preparations she had heard making for this entertainment, and anxious besides to see Sir Patrick, who by this time had arrived at Glengary, Elizabeth, since thus compelled to stay another day at it, suffered herself to be prevailed on by Mrs. M'Tulloch to take a peep at the gay assembly in the evening.

For the purpose of enabling her to do this, she procured her a mask, and about twelve o'clock, after her ears had been long assailed by the rattling of carriages, and the shouts of the rustic mob assembled without to view the characters, conducted her by private passages to a small door, communicating with the apartments laid out for the company, and to which she desired her to return, as soon as she saw them unmasking, that being the signal agreed on for the throwing open of the supper-room. This door opened into an anti-chamber, commanding a full view of the extensive suite of rooms fitted up for the occasion, and exhibiting a scene of the most splendid kind, such as brought to the recollection of Elizabeth the descriptions given in the romances of the Arabian writers of enchanted palaces. Music lent its powerful aid to heighten the fascination; which still further the fine perfume of the aromatic shrubs and flowers that were intermingled with the other ornaments encreased.

Dazzled by the glare, and somewhat agitated by her novel situation, Elizabeth could not for some minutes summons sufficient courage to move; at length, her tre-

mor a little subsiding, she ventured forward, and soon found herself in another apartment, exhibiting a very different appearance to the one she had first entered, that being quite solitary, and this much crowded; it represented a gothic hall, furnished as such apartments generally are, with shields, spears, and coats of armour; at one end was an elevated seat, resembling a throne, on which a mask, habited as an ancient chieftan, was seated; and a step or two below him sat a lady, dressed in a loose kind of robe, with a fillet round her head, and a harp before her. These masks, from the information she had received from Mrs. M'Tulloch, Elizabeth knew at once to be her grandfather and his lady, and she accordingly stopped to observe them.

They appeared to have excited much attention, and to afford no little amusement to the company assembled round them. At length, after some little tossings and bowings of the head, the white armed, or as Mrs. M'Tulloch would have styled her, white-gloved, daughter of Toscar, began literally to strike the harp, for more she could not do. She continued to do so for several minutes, till at last she was completely interrupted by the convulsive laughter and mock applause which her performance excited. On the subsiding of this boisterous mirth, the king of Morven, bending towards her, gravely exclaimed....

'Pleasant is thy music, oh daughter of streamy Lutha!'

'Aye, aye,' nodding to him, and then looking round at the company, 'that's I....I am the daughter of streamy Lutha.'

'I thought you were the daughter of the mighty Toscar,' cried a mask beside her.

'Oh, well it's no matter, 'tis all the same thing, and so....' in an expecting tone, again turning towards the king of Morven.

'I will reward it with a story,' his majesty replied: 'thou must know then I was once young....'

'Yes, but you are now old, and devilish foolish,' interrupted a gaunt-looking figure close to him, dressed like a Spaniard; and from this circumstance known by

Elizabeth, in consequence of the housekeeper's previous information, to be Sir Patrick Dunboyne.

The king of Morven, instead of replying to this, it must be allowed, not over polite observation, suddenly began to brandish his spear, the generality of the company hoped with an intention of resenting it ; instead, however, of realizing this good-natured hope, he started up, after a few flourishes, and in a threatening attitude, looked up at the ceiling, as if he had seen something there that displeased him.

'The king of Morven is getting mad !' exclaimed some of the masks laughing, and with well counterfeited terror, making a feigned effort to get farther from him.

'No,' cried his majesty, 'but the spirit of Loda frowns upon me, but he frowns in vain ; the sons of the wind shall not frighten the king of Morven : ' and again he began brandishing his spear, with greater violence than before, at the ceiling ; in doing which his foot slipped, and he fell prostrate on the ground ; he was almost instantly raised, but so hurt by his fall, as to be incapable of resuming his seat, and was accordingly therefore carried off to his chamber by the servants, who had been called in to his assistance.

As soon as the alarm and tumult occasioned by this accident had in a little degree subsided, the lovely Malvina began to utter some not very gentle invectives against the unfortunate king of Morven.

'Was ever any thing so stupid !' she exclaimed, 'after all the trouble I have had, in making him and myself perfect in our characters, to have him not know what he was about.'

'Tis a long time since he has known that,' cried the Spaniard, or as, for the sake of brevity we shall in future call him, Sir Patrick ; 'when men suffer women to make asses of them, they seldom have the right use of their senses ; by the Lord, if I had unfortunately been buckled to one, and she had endeavoured to persuade me to make such a fool of myself as that poor silly old man, I'd have blown her to Mount Atlas.'

'Well, the further you blew her from yourself, the better pleased, I dare say, she would have been,' rejoined the fair Malvina, a little spitefully.

'We are always valiant till we are tried,' cried a mask, somewhat sneeringly, in the character of Moody, in the Country Girl.

'Yes,' returned Sir Patrick, 'and wise in our conceit, till, from the laughter around us, we find some fool has made an ass of us: you thought yourself equal to the management of a seraglio of such simpletons as Miss Peggy, and yet what a pretty trick she contrived to play you.'

Elizabeth all this time was leaning against a pillar near the vacated throne, so shocked by the accident her grandfather had met with, and the ridicule and contempt he had exposed himself to....his grey hairs, notwithstanding his inhumanity to her father, having impressed her with something like veneration for him....that but for a fear of not being able to find her way back to her chamber by herself, she would have made an immediate effort for regaining it. She was now compelled by the moving of the crowd to quit this situation, and the vicinity of her uncle; and by degrees the music, the sprightly sallies of the company, and the gaiety and brilliancy of all around her, dissipated the unpleasant feelings that had been thus excited in her mind, and reanimated her spirits.

She had nearly taken the circuit of the rooms, when her further progress was impeded by the crowd two very young girls, habited as Savoyards, had collected about them on their pausing to play.

Scarcely, however, had they begun to tune their guitars, and make preparations for singing, when one of them, owing to the heat of the room, diffidence, or perhaps both together became so ill, that she was obliged to resign her guitar and unmask. Instead however, of getting better for having done so, she grew so much worse in a few minutes, notwithstanding the instantaneous aid of smelling-bottles and fans, that she was obliged to be carried from the room, in a state that left but little reason to hope she would be able to return to it again.

Her companion, who had been all anxiety about her, but who had not made the smallest effort to follow her out, now began to cry most bitterly. The company, of course, attributing her tears to the most amiable feelings,

those who were nearest to her exerted themselves to console her ; she soon, however, with very great candour, gave them to understand that she should not have regretted what had happened, at least as much as she did, but for its threatening to prevent her keeping up the character she had thought proper to appear in, and which she protested she had been endeavouring to fit herself for upwards of a month.

‘ If she had only sung one or two of the duets we have been so long practising for this occasion, I shouldn’t have minded it so much her being obliged to retire so soon ; but to have all this trouble for nothing,’ proceeded the poor little girl, ‘ Oh, dear ! Oh, dear ! ’tis too bad indeed. If any one can play,’ tendering the guitar of her companion to the circle, ‘ let them take this, and they’ll oblige me for ever.’

Her prayers and supplications for some time, answered no other purpose than that of encreasing the mirth which her distress, as soon as the real cause of it was known, had excited. For this Elizabeth conceived her extreme youth so sufficient an excuse, that she could not help taking compassion on her ; after a little irresolution, and reflecting that as they knew nothing of her musical abilities, her now obeying the impulse of good nature could not possibly betray her to any of the Black Crag party, decided on making an effort to prevent her being totally disappointed ; and accordingly drawing nearer to her by degrees, touched her arm, in order to obtain her attention, and then whispered to her, that if she would detach herself from the present crowd, she would endeavour to assist her in a duet or two.

‘ Oh, dear ! oh, dear ! ’ cried the poor little Savoyard, in low but joyful accents, ‘ how delightful ! whoever you are, you are a charming creature for your good nature ; yes, yes, I’ll soon get away from this crowd ; I’ll go to a seat, as if I didn’t mean to play or sing, and then they’ll mind me no longer.’

Elizabeth nodded significantly, and the little girl requesting she would keep her in sight, soon made her way to a seat, where, as she had predicted, she was shortly left to herself. Elizabeth then took a seat beside her, re-

ceived the instrument, and was instructed what duets to sing. Every necessary preliminary being adjusted between them, the little Savoyard having previously, however, examined her dress, to see that it was not tumbled, or injured in any manner by the pressure of the crowd she had just escaped from, set forward for the adjacent room, with a firm step and confident air, followed by her new associate : as soon as she had penetrated some way into this apartment, which was also full, she began to touch her guitar, and motioning to Elizabeth to take her station beside her, commenced that beautiful duet in the Stranger of

‘ There is a grief that lodges here,
It breathes no sigh, it sheds no tear’.....

It has already been said, that Elizabeth touched the guitar with inimitable taste....that her voice also was soft, tender, and melodious : that the room, therefore, rung with applause on her ceasing to sing, cannot be wondered at, especially when ’tis added, that she sung and played with her usual excellence, the concealment of her face preventing her feeling that confusion she must otherwise have experienced at performing before so large an assembly, and which could not have failed of preventing her from doing so. But the admiration which was excited was not confined solely to her musical talents ; the harmonious symmetry of her graceful form, rendered strikingly conspicuous by the lightness and simplicity of her dress, consisting of a fine white muslin jacket and petticoat, cut as low on the bosom and back as modesty would permit, and ornamented with a rich wreath of roses fastened on one shoulder, and hanging low at the opposite side ; the fine redundance of her glossy hair, twisted into loose tresses at the top of her head, the beauty of her arms and hands, which she had uncovered, in order to be better enabled to play....rendered her altogether so attractive, so captivating an object, that every eye was fastened on her, every tongue busied in enquiring who she was.

The little Savoyard was applied to for information on this subject ; she, however, could give none....and quickly tried to put a stop to these enquiries, by calling upon

her again to sing, the applause with which the room had echoed, and half of which at least she took to herself, having rendered her impatient to give another specimen of her musical abilities. In vain, however, she called upon her. The observation she had attracted was too evident to Elizabeth not to confuse and alarm her. She dreaded its occasioning her steps to be watched, and under this dread, could not forbear now doing what she had never before done....namely, repenting her having obeyed the impulse of good nature ; as, but for having done so in the present instance, she persuaded herself she should have been able to have glided about without attracting any particular notice. To subject herself any longer to what was so extremely embarrassing to her, was not to be thought of ; she, therefore, spite of the entreaties and almost resistance of the company, and the supplications, nay tears of the little Savoyard, laid the guitar on a bench contiguous to where she was standing, and immediately endeavoured to make her way into another room. Vain, however, would have been her efforts for this purpose, so closely was she surrounded by her admirers, but for the interposition of a mask in a black domino....‘ See,’ cried he, in an animated tone, on succeeding in the efforts he made to extricate her, ‘ what it is to be too attractive.’

Elizabeth started ; for in his voice she fancied she recognized that of the audacious, and detested Ruthven ; nor was she mistaken ; it was Ruthven indeed himself, the unprincipled Ruthven, whom beauty or elegance never failed of attracting ; but though he had thus attached himself, as he imagined, to a stranger, the passion he had conceived for Elizabeth still existed in full force, and he only waited until the night of the masquerade was over, to set out in pursuit of her.

Elizabeth immediately endeavoured to separate herself from him, but to no purpose ; his eyes were never turned from her for a moment ; and the pain this circumstance occasioned her, was aggravated by the efforts he made to engage her in conversation....Nothing, however, could induce her to reply to him, so fearful was she of her voice betraying her ; and at length he asked her, whe-

ther, like the nightingale, she could only sing, not speak?

But great as was the agitation which his noticing, or rather persecuting her in this manner, caused her, it was faint compared to that she felt on perceiving the company beginning to unmask, without seeing any possibility of her withdrawing unobserved by him. A faint sickness, owing to the apprehension she was in, stole over her, which for a few seconds rendered her scarcely able to resist the efforts he made to remove her mask after he had taken off his own.

‘No, no’ she at length exclaimed, in a low trembling voice, such as she trusted would prevent his recognizing her, and stopping his hand with hers, ‘it must not come off.

‘Must not....and why, my angel? surely you will not be so cruel, so tantalizing, as to keep on this invidious shade all night.’

‘Let me go, let me go,’ cried Elizabeth, almost gasping through agitation, and trying to disengage herself from him.

Her supplications, however, to him to release her, had the very contrary effect to what she desired; the motive to which they were owing being too obvious not to awaken a degree of curiosity, that made him resolve to persist in endeavouring to discover who she was. Accordingly, he held her firmly by the hand, and spite of her resistance and continued entreaties, drew her into the supper-room, where he took it for granted the sight of every other person without a mask would occasion her to throw aside hers.

The Goddess of Luxury herself might have enjoyed pleasure at this banquet, nothing that could possibly gratify her, or her votaries, having been omitted at it.... The apartment in which it was laid out was of immense length, and proportionable breadth; the ceiling lofty, richly embellished, and supported by pillars of the most exquisite workmanship, entwined on this occasion with wreaths of flowers, and festoons of variegated lamps, the

spaces between each filled up with lemon and orange trees in full blow, and now scenting the room with their delicious sweetness.....At each end was an elevated gallery, brilliantly illuminated, and each containing an excellent band ; and, immediately beneath, magnificent transparencies....one representing the Gods and Goddesses, in the midst of golden clouds, at a banquet on Mount Olympus ; and the other, Venus, in her chariot, attended by sea nymphs and tritons, flying over the waves to meet Aurora rising in the horizon. The supper was laid out on detached tables, and every one, as they entered, seated themselves promiscuously at them.

The splendour of this scene was nearly lost upon poor Elizabeth ; still, however, a faint hope of being able to make her escape unobserved, on the thinning of the crowd about the entrance, kept her from sinking beneath her agitation ; but when in the course of a few minutes she perceived this rather increasing than lessening, and that of course there was no chance whatever of this hope being realized, her feelings became nearly uncontrollable, and compelled her to accept the seat the persecuting Ruthven had for some time been pressing her to take ; but not all his solicitations or arguments could prevail on her to unmask.

The seat he procured her happened to be at the very table where Mrs. Munro was seated....a circumstance that did not tend to diminish the agitation of Elizabeth ; especially when on timidly glancing round, she also beheld Mrs. Dunbar and Delacour at it, and, to her unutterable surprise, Lord O'Sinister.

' Good heavens ! ' she could scarcely forbear exclaiming aloud at sight of his deceitful visage, ' there seems to be a combination of circumstances this night to distress me.'

Still, however, she endeavoured to support her spirits, and thus avoid betraying herself by reflecting on the chance the dispersion of the company after supper would again afford her of making her escape from the rooms in the manner she wished ; but all her efforts for this purpose were rendered abortive, by her at length perceiving herself an object of general attention to every

one at the table, and hearing the most invidious remarks, accompanied by sneers, shrugs, and titterings, on her acting so indecorously as to keep on her mask when every other person had laid aside theirs ; and overpowered by shame and confusion, she fainted away.

Ruthven, perceiving her dropping from her chair, caught her in his arms. Her mask was immediately removed, and to the unutterable astonishment of all at the table who knew her, her features presented to their view.

Mrs. Dunbar's involuntary exclamation on the occasion betraying her name to Mrs. Munro, that lady, in great wrath and agitation of spirits, at finding a person whom she had so many powerful reasons for wishing to keep at a distance from it under her roof, followed her, after apologizing to such of her guests as were immediately in her vicinity, for leaving them thus abruptly, from the supper-room, whence she was carried by Delacour and Ruthven into one adjoining the hall, in order to enquire by what means she had gained admission to her assembly.

Mrs. Dunbar also did the same, anxious to hear what reason she could assign, for continuing in the neighbourhood of Black Crag, instead of returning home, as she concluded she meant immediately to have done on leaving it.

The room into which Elizabeth was conveyed happened to be the one to which Sir Patrick Dunboyne had retired a few minutes before....disgusted at beholding such parade and ostentation, while the rightful heir of the family, for aught he knew to the contrary, was languishing in obscurity. He had just taken a sandwich, which his man Mr. O'Grady brought in to him, and was washing it down with a tumbler of wine and water, when he was thus broke in upon....

'So, so,' cried he, on perceiving Elizabeth, 'this comes of people cramming their rooms in such a manner that one can't breathe.'

'No, it comes of no such thing,' replied Mrs. Munro maliciously, or rather furiously ; 'so I beg, Sir Patrick, you may cease your remarks on the subject.'

The coolness of this apartment, together with the aid of a smelling-bottle, speedily restored Elizabeth to her senses ; but the shock she received nearly deprived her of them again, when on recovering and encountering the eyes of Delacour, she caught from him a glance of mingled tenderness, pity, scorn, and regret, and saw him, immediately after, vanish from the room with an upraised hand, as if bidding her an eternal farewell.

‘ They have prevailed then....the machinations of my enemies have prevailed,’ she mentally exclaimed to herself, at the moment, in an agony, to which no language could have done justice ; ‘ this unfortunate incident has confirmed the slanders, it is but too evident, from the conduct of Delacour, the contemptuous looks of his aunt, they have propagated against me, and my prospects of happiness are destroyed for ever.’

Her head sunk on her bosom, and a shower of tears fell from her.

Unmoved by the sight of her distress, or rather more irritated by it, from the effect she thought it calculated to produce on others, Mrs. Munro caused her quickly to raise her downcast eyes, by now demanding, in the most authoritative tone, to what circumstance was owing her introduction to her assembly ?

Elizabeth started ; the consequences which might result to Mrs. M’Tulloch, from her candidly answering this question, became too obvious to her, not to cause her to hesitate for a moment, and then cast a timid, but beseeching look at Mrs. Dunbar, to extricate her from her present difficulty....a look to which that lady replied by another, that harrowed up the very soul of Elizabeth. Then turning to Mrs. Munro....‘ Though from the manner of Miss Munro, you might be led to imagine the contrary, believe me, Madam, I can give you no information on the subject ; all I can tell you concerning the young lady is, that about three weeks ago, she came into this neighbourhood, and owing to a circumstance, not necessary to relate, became soon after my guest, but only for a few days, owing, she said, to her wish to return home ; why she did not do so, to what motive her re-

maining concealed in the neighbourhood, and appearing here this night, is owing, she must herself explain ; but as I have no wish to be present at the explanation, I must now beg leave to retire.'

'Stop, Madam, stop,' cried Elizabeth, wildly springing from her chair, and catching the arm of Mrs. Dunbar, as she saw her about withdrawing ; 'tis requisite.... 'tis essential to my feelings that you should hear it ;' yet suddenly reflecting on the mischief that might ensue from avowing before Sir Patrick, (whose 'antique sword had not yet,' she was convinced, 'grown rebellious to his arm') the indignities she had met with from Ruthven ; 'that one which, I flatter myself, will restore me to the good opinion, I am now but too apprehensive of having lost, I could wish, on account of others, to give to you alone ; favour me, therefore, I entreat, with a few minutes conversation in private, and, I make no doubt, I shall be able to exculpate myself in your eyes.'

Mrs. Dunbar shook her head, with an air of mingled incredulity and scorn....then 'the imprudent are ever apt to arrogate too much to themselves,' she said. 'I will however believe that you would not speak with the certainty you do, of being able to regain my good opinion, if I listened to your defence, but that you are unacquainted with the circumstances I have learned respecting you.'

'Then my conjectures of having been slandered are not erroneous,' cried Elizabeth, with a look of horror.

'If you call accusation slander, they are not ; but whilst I acknowledge this, let me also say, that so high was the opinion I conceived of you, from your appearance and manners....so high also was that of Captain Delacour's.... (Yes,' perceiving Elizabeth start, and look at her with still greater earnestness, 'his sentiments for you were not concealed from me) that nothing but the positive demonstration we have had this night of your unworthiness, could have made us believe aught to your prejudice.... Farewell,' forcibly disengaging herself from the almost convulsive grasp of Elizabeth : 'for your own sake, I advise you to make no further efforts to impose on me, since such can answer no other end than to render me

still more exasperated with you. My anger, however, does not deprive you of my good wishes: I shall not cease to hope that you may regret the past, and speedily endeavour to regain the path you have so lamentably strayed from.'

With these words she retired, closing the door after her.... 'Oh, agony!' exclaimed Elizabeth, clasping her hands together, and dropping nearly senseless, at this confirmation of her fears respecting Delacour, upon the chair nearest to her.

'Why, what is the matter?' cried Sir Patrick, whom surprise had hitherto kept silent, rising as he spoke, and approaching Elizabeth; did I hear aright? did Mrs. Dunbar really call you Munro?'

'Did she!' repeated Mrs. Munro contemptuously, (owing to its having suddenly occurred to her, that Sir Patrick himself had been the means of bringing Elizabeth to Glengary, for the purpose of endeavouring to introduce her to her grandfather.) 'Oh to be sure you are quite ignorant that she is the daughter of your hopeful nephew, the disgrace and plague of his poor father.'

'The daughter....the daughter of my dear Robert!' exclaimed Sir Patrick, turning from Mrs. Munro, whose eloquence had for a minute suspended his movements, and in his eagerness to embrace Elizabeth, pushing aside the audacious Ruthven, who, the minute Mrs. Dunbar disappeared, had hastened to her assistance: 'my sweet girl,' folding her to his bosom, and kissing her tear-bedewed cheek, 'how much am I rejoiced to see you!' Then glancing at Mrs. Munro.... 'Woman, woman,' with an uplifted hand, and in a voice of thunder, he cried, 'repeat not the words you have just made use of, lest you should occasion me to forget your sex and my own....Come, my dear girl,' again directing his regards to Elizabeth, 'come,' gently raising her from her seat, and leading her to the one he had just occupied, 'compose yourself; whilst I am by, no one shall insult you with impunity; and when you are a little recovered, perhaps you'll oblige me by letting me know to what circumstance your being under this no longer happy, or respectable roof, is owing.'

'Pretty language,' Sir Patrick, 'pretty language,' in a voice almost choaked with passion, cried Mrs. Munro.

'Tis such language returned he calmly, 'as you have not lately been accustomed to, else you would not be so ridiculously vain as you are....the language of truth.'

'Oh, let me not, I implore,' cried Elizabeth, coming a little to herself, and in the most supplicating accent, as she gratefully kissed the hand of her uncle, 'be the occasion of any disturbance here.

'Then this instant confess by what means you were brought hither, Miss,' vociferated the enraged Mrs. Munro.

Elizabeth trembled :....she dreaded the disclosure required of her causing the dismissal of Mrs. M'Tulloch ; but finding it impossible to evade it, endeavoured to collect herself to make it. But at the instant her lips were opening for the purpose, she caught a glimpse of Ruthven ; and reading, in his countenance, an expression of the greatest anxiety to hear what she would say, her unwillingness to gratify him, united to the detestation in which she held him....him, to whose conduct was owing all her present distress and confusion, she paused, until, at her express request, Sir Patrick had desired him to leave the room. She then, as briefly and collectedly as agitation would enable her to speak, informed Sir Patrick, that not having met with the politeness she had a right to expect from some of the guests of Mrs. Dunbar, she could no longer think of remaining in her house ; but being disinclined to return home during the absence of her parents had availed herself of Mrs. M'Tulloch's offer of an apartment at Glengary till she heard of their arrival.

On her ceasing to speak....' Oh, my dear sister,' exclaimed Sir Patrick, with hands and eyes uplifted, 'how little did I once imagine I should ever have heard of a grandchild of your's being indebted to a servant for an asylum in this house ?'

'You should rather say,' cried Mrs. Munro, with the most malignant aspect, 'that you little imagined you should ever have heard of her son, acting in such a manner as to cause him to be an exile from it.'

'Tis false....false as hell! cried Sir Patrick; 'tis not the manner in which he acted, but his father acted, [that has caused him to be so....Woman,' again giving her a glance of fury, 'once more I caution you to have some command over yourself; for I am not, by any means, in a humour now to bear your insolence, when this child brings so forcibly to my mind the wrongs you have done her father.'

'Wrongs!' reiterated Mrs. Munro; 'but I will not waste any words on you; I will no longer delay letting Mrs. M'Tulloch know what she has to expect, for bringing a person she well knows her master would never have admitted into it,' and she darted a dreadfully malignant glance, at Elizabeth, 'to this house.' She rang the bell as she spoke, with violence, and commanded the house-keeper (who, alarmed at not finding Elizabeth at the appointed place, had just entered the hall, to try whether she could gain any tidings of her from the servants) immediately into her presence.

Accordingly Mrs. M'Tulloch made her appearance in a few minutes, and to the great consolation of Elizabeth, stood the brunt of the storm that directly burst upon, her without shrinking. She ceased, however, to derive pleasure from this circumstance, on finding it only served to render Mrs. Munro more furious.

With a violence appalling to Elizabeth, she said, or rather swore, that Mrs. M'Tulloch should the next morning leave Glengary.

Agonized at the idea of her losing a situation on her account, for which her parents, she but too well knew, had not the power of making her any recompence, Elizabeth, with tears, endeavoured to get this sentence revoked; but in vain....Mrs. Munro continued inflexible.... till at last, as a dernier effort, she promised, if she would comply with her entreaties on the subject, to quit Glengary by the first conveyance that offered, without making the slightest attempt to introduce herself to her grandfather, which, she plainly saw, Mrs. Munro was in dread of her doing.

This promise was eagerly caught at; Mrs. Munro greatly fearing notwithstanding her influence over the

mind of her husband, that he could not behold such a descendant as Elizabeth, without feelings that might ultimately hurt her own interest.

Sir Patrick, who had meditated bringing Elizabeth into the presence of her grandfather, opposed it, as did also Mrs. M'Tulloch, but to no purpose. She could not be persuaded to make an effort to serve herself at the expense of another person; and the latter was accordingly, in consequence of it, forgiven. This matter arranged she quickly withdrew from the malignant and haughty glances of the unworthy mistress of the mansion.

Sir Patrick accompanied her to her chamber, where a long and circumstantial conversation took place between them; in the course of which she gave him a particular account of all that had lately befallen her father, and slightly touched on the prospects of her brother, but with an involuntary sigh, owing to the apprehension she was under from her discovery of the real character of Lord O'Sinister, of these not being realized; and he, in return, detailed to her the embarrassments he was then under, and bitterly lamented the imprudence which had occasioned them, since the means of preventing his doing what his heart dictated for her father and his family.

'How severely am I now punished for the errors of my youth,' proceeded he, 'by the reflection, that but for them, I might now have been able to serve the descendants of a sister I adored; yes, yes, only like a cursed fool as I was, I never rested till I got poor Poulsalougha completely in the mud, what a comfortable home should I have had for them.'

He assigned the same reasons for the cessation of his correspondence with her father, and the continuance of his visits at Glengary, that Mrs. M'Tulloch had done; and finally removed from the mind of Elizabeth every doubt of the sincerity of his regard for him.

On his rising to take leave of her, which, late as the hour was he would not have done as soon as he did, but that he understood from Mrs. M'Tulloch the carriage she had engaged for her would be at the house as soon as it was light, he tried to force a purse on her. She was too well apprized however, of the state of his finances

to suffer herself to be prevailed on to take it ; but at length consented to oblige him by the acceptance of a ring, as a token of his regard for her and her family.

The rest which he had left her for the purpose of permitting her to enjoy, her mind was too much disturbed to let her think of ; and even if she had an inclination for it, she would still have resisted taking it, in order to avail herself of the present opportunity for writing an explanatory letter to Mrs. Dunbar. So hopeless, however, was she of this having the desired effect, that but for the consideration of performing an incumbent duty, in doing whatever had a chance of clearing her character from the aspersions cast upon it, she would have thrown aside her pen ere she had well commenced her self-enjoined task.... This letter, blistered in more than one place with tears of indignation and sorrow, she committed to the care of Mrs. M'Tulloch, with an injunction to deliver it, herself, into the hands of Mrs. Dunbar....an injunction she promised to observe, adding, she would take care to corroborate its contents, by detailing all the particulars she had previously learnt from Elizabeth....an assurance which afforded her some comfort, as she was well convinced she could not possibly have a warmer or more faithful advocate.

In reply to the information which Elizabeth gave her respecting Lord O'Sinister, she assured her she knew nothing of his being amongst the guests invited at Glengarry. It was impossible, indeed, she should, as his appearance there this night was owing not to invitation, but to the importunities, or rather threats, of the lady who had been the means of bringing him down to Firgrove ; and who, from motives of pride, as well as interest, wishing to retain him in her chains, had insisted on his giving her a meeting at the masquerade, under pain of their intimacy being betrayed, and he thus exposed to the vengeance of her relatives, the idea of which, at this juncture, was too disagreeable to his imagination, not to induce him to do what she required.

Nothing but policy prevented him from following Elizabeth from the supper-room, as never, in his eyes, had she appeared more beautiful than at the moment he so

unexpectedly discovered her ; he therefore still resolved on persevering in his designs against her, trusting, if by fair means he could not get her into his toils, he should, by imprisoning her father, which he had the power of doing whenever he pleased, having had the bond for the five hundred pounds he lent him made payable on demand, instead of by instalments, and making her compliance with his wishes the price of his liberation.

At the expected hour the chaise arrived for Elizabeth : on descending to the private door at which it was drawn up, in order to avoid the crowd of carriages assembled round the public one, she found her uncle waiting to hand her into it, and Mr. O'Grady, his man, already on horseback, to attend her to Heathwood....an attention which she was not only grateful for, but well pleased with, as the terror she was under of Lord O'Sinister and Ruthven would have made her feel uneasy at travelling without protection. Sir Patrick's farewell to her was truly affectionate, and such as drew tears into her eyes.

As the chaise drove on, she involuntarily turned her eyes towards Black Crag, and through the mists of morning endeavoured to descry its 'castled cliff'....but the haziness of the morn completely veiled it from her sight, and, with a desponding sigh at the idea of never, perhaps, again beholding it, she at length sunk back in the carriage.

As she drew near home, she began to be agitated with fears of not getting collectedly through the story contrived to account, in a plausible manner, for her changes of residence since she had left it.

But these fears were unnecessary ; the strict examination which might have created a confusion, that would probably have prevented her retaining the composure necessary to carry her through her fabricated tale, did not take place ; for as the mind, devoid of suspicion, is seldom over minute in its enquiries, so her parents, not having the smallest on the present occasion, did not perplex her with many questions.

Not being prepared for her return, they were most agreeably surprised at it, and were not a little gratified by her relation of the kind attentions shewn to her by Mrs.

Dunbar, Sir Patrick, and the good-natured Mrs. M'Tulloch.

For those which she experienced from Mr. O'Grady on the road, he received their warm acknowledgments, and would have received more substantial proofs of their gratitude, but for his positive refusal of any present: with the chaise which brought her to Heathwood, he quitted it, charged with the thanks and compliments of the family to his master.



CHAP. IX.

' Was it his youth, his valour, or success ?
These might perhaps be found in other men :
'Twas that respect, that awful homage paid me;
That fearful love which trembled in his eyes,
And with a silent earthquake shook his soul.
But when he spoke, what tender words he said !
So softly, that like flakes of feather'd snow,
They melted as they fell.'

DAYDEN.

RESTORED to the tenderness of her beloved parents, and the soothing tranquillity of their peaceful home, Elizabeth trusted she should soon be able to recover the serenity recent occurrences had so cruelly interrupted, but which she was conscious she had done nothing to deserve losing. Vainly, however, did she endeavour to regain it, by trying to banish these occurrences from her thoughts; she could think of nothing else, of nothing but the unworthy light in which she had been made to appear to Delacour....the destruction of her fond, her flattering hopes respecting him, and the consequence was, her mind continuing a stranger to quiet.

Ill at dissembling, the efforts she made to veil her unhappiness from her parents were unsuccessful. They soon discovered it, and as she had mentioned having met Delacour at Black Crag, and as they knew her pre-

vious opinion of him, did not hesitate placing it to the account of a hopeless passion....an idea that gave them no little anguish, as they well knew her's was not a heart capable of a slight or transient attachment.

Without distressing her, however, as they were conscious they should do, by appearing to notice what she so evidently wished to conceal, they did every thing they thought calculated to divert her mind, and give a turn to her thoughts ; and for that purpose courted the society of their neighbours, of which they had some that were highly respectable and agreeable, and promoted her going out, as much as possible, amongst her young acquaintance.

A suspicion of the motive that occasioned them to do this, and, of consequence, the pain they would feel if she did not comply with their wishes, made Elizabeth cheerfully acquiesce in them, though solitude at the moment was what she sighed for. The benefit, however, which they hoped and expected she would derive from change of scene and amusement, she evinced no symptoms of experiencing ; on the contrary, she daily appeared more languid and melancholy. Still, however, they determined to persist in the measures they had adopted for her cure ; believing, that if any thing could enable her to overcome the feelings that now preyed upon her, it would be innocent recreation.

But though reason and filial love influenced Elizabeth to embrace every opportunity that offered for trying the efficacy of these measures, she could not, sometimes, resist the temptation of doing what she was but too well aware was calculated to counteract any good effect they might have had, namely, sequestering herself in solitude, where, unseen of all, she could give vent to the anguish that oppressed her heart.

' Oh, my parents !' she more than once, on these occasions, exclaimed to herself, ' you would not deem me perverse, if you knew the real cause of my unhappiness.... if you knew that to injurious suspicions, even more than to hopeless love, it was owing ; but never, never may you obtain a knowledge of this....oh, never may you be wounded where most vulnerable, by knowing that the

blighting mildew of slander has fallen upon the reputation of your child, that reputation which you value more than her existence.'

The autumn was by this time far advanced, that season so delightful to the contemplative and melancholy mind....when, in the fading scenery, man sees an emblem of the evening of his days, and, in the scattered leaves, a picture of his dissipated hopes....that season in which

.....' In every breeze the power
Of philosophic melancholy comes !

Inflames imagination ; thro' the breast
Infuses every tenderness ; and far
Beyond dim earth exalts the swelling thought,
Ten thousand thousand fleet ideas, such
As never mingled with the vulgar dream,
Crowd fast into the mind's creative eye,
As fast the correspondent passions rise,
As varied, and as high : devotion rais'd
To rapture, and divine astonishment ;
The love of nature unconfus'd, and chief
Of human race, the large ambitious wish,
To make them blest ; the sigh of suffering worth
Lost in obscurity ; the noble scorn
Of tyrant pride ; the fearless great resolve ;
The wonder which the dying patriot draws,
Inspiring glory thro' remotest time ;
Th' awakened throb for virtue, and for fame ;
The sympathies of love, and friendship dear,
With all the social offspring of the heart.'

Elizabeth's passion for solitude was heightened by the season ; the incessant rustling of the trees, the silence of the saddened grove, where scarce was heard

' One dying strain, to cheer the woodman's toil ;'

the calm, the quiet, that seemed to invest every surrounding object, shed a soothing charm over her feelings.

More than usually oppressed one morning, she stole away from the house soon after breakfast, and hastily traversing the garden, plunged into a wood that skirted it, where, throwing herself upon a little mossy hillock, she freely indulged her tears. The scene by which she was surrounded was but ill calculated to stay them ; and

perhaps it was from knowing this that she sought it: the trees, in every direction, presented only leafless boughs to her view, through which the wind already began to make wintry music, the summits of the congregated mountains looked cold and dismal, the grass in the vales had assumed a mournful hue, and the fine verdure of the shrubs was lost, whilst

‘ Haply some widowed songster pour’d his plaint
Far in faint warblings, thro’ the tawny copse,
While congregated thrushes, linnets, larks,
And each wild throat, whose artless strains so late
Swell’d all the music of the swarming shade,
Robb’d of their tuneful souls, now shiv’ring sat
On the dead tree, a dull desponding flock....
With not a brightness waving o’er their plumes,
And nought save chatt’ring discord in their mouths.’

‘ Yet a few months, and this scene will regain its wonted charms,’ cried Elizabeth, as she pensively viewed it ; ‘ but the hopes, the flattering expectations of my heart.... will they revive? Oh that I had never gone to any distance from my home, and then I should not have had to mourn over their overthrow.’

A gentle sigh immediately behind her caused her to start, and hastily turn round ; and, with emotions impossible to be described, she beheld Delacour bending over the seat she occupied.

A shriek of surprise involuntarily escaped her, as, scarcely conscious of what she was about, she started up, and ran towards the house. Her agitation, however, rather retarded her speed, Delacour easily overtook her, and gently seizing her hand, arrested her flight.

‘ Am I then so hateful, so very hateful an object,’ said he, with a look of mingled tenderness and reproach, ‘ that Miss Munro should fly me with terror and disgust? or does her wish to avoid me proceed from resentment? oh, if to the latter, let her only suffer me to explain what my anguish has been at the thoughts of having incurred that resentment, suffer me to explain the circumstances that caused me to do so, and, she will, I trust, in some degree, forgive me.’

Elizabeth bowed....she could not speak at the moment, so great was the tumult of her heart, at the delightful

hope which these words inspired, of the injustice that had been done her being at length detected.

Delacour, construing her silence in the manner most agreeable to himself, and passionately kissing the fair and trembling hand he detained in his, led her back to the seat she had started from, where, throwing himself on the sod beside her, he quickly entered upon the explanation he had taught her to expect, but which, as delicacy induced him to omit some particulars requisite to the illustration of this story, we shall give in our own words, instead of his.

One of Lord O'Sinister's emissaries having overheard the conversation that took place between Elizabeth and her preserver Beerscroft, in the chapel, his Lordship was, by this means, apprized of her becoming the guest of Mrs. Dunbar. To attempt to wrest her from such protection was not to be thought of; but he did, if possible, worse, by immediately setting about endeavouring to poison the mind of Mrs. Dunbar against her.

The agent he employed for this purpose was Lady Lochness....a lady, whose extravagant, or rather vicious propensities, had reduced her to so low an ebb of fortune, that she was as greedy after gain as an usurer; of which her avarice, Lord O'Sinister, who knew her well, and was informed of her being at Black Crag, previous to his arrival in its vicinity, took advantage, to make her one in his schemes against the innocent Elizabeth. He easily contrived to obtain a private interview with her ladyship, in which he fully explained these to her, and, by means that may be guessed, obtained a positive promise from her, to do every thing in her power likely to further them.

The high opinion which she knew Mrs. Dunbar, owing to her plausible manners, and total ignorance of her real character, entertained of her, made her flatter herself with succeeding as she wished, in her efforts for this purpose.

After artfully introducing a conversation relative to Elizabeth and her family, by a warm panegyric on her beauty, she proceeded to ask Mrs. Dunbar if she knew aught of her mother? and, on her replying in the negative, according to her expectations, hesitated not to in-

form her, but under the seal of secrecy, agreeable to the instructions of his Lordship, who dictated to her all she was to say on the subject that she had heard, from undoubted authority, but which she was not at liberty to mention, that Mrs. Munro was a woman of very light character, and, notwithstanding the vigilance of her husband, had contrived to instil her own principles into the mind of her daughter.

‘As a proof of which,’ continued this most artful and abandoned woman, ‘the encouragement the young lady gave, or may now be giving, for aught I know to the contrary, to the libertine addresses of that profligate, Lord O’Sinister. He saw her by chance, at Firgrove, which is, as I suppose you know, in the vicinity of her father’s residence, and immediately became enamoured of her; but concluding that the daughter of such a man as Captain Munro must have been brought up virtuously, and, of course, not to be won by any thing but the semblance of honour....instead of having recourse to any of his old arts of seduction, he contrived a scheme for getting her father out of the way, and introducing himself to her, under a fictitious name, in order to be enabled to offer her his hand. Of his being a wolf in sheep’s clothing, the young lady soon received information from a secret friend. The discovery of his baseness, however, caused no alteration in her conduct towards him; she was too anxious to obtain the independence and gewgaws he had promised her on becoming his, to let it have any influence over her, especially when she reflected that, on matters being cleared up, instead of being sunk in the estimation of the world, she should merely be regarded in the light of a poor betrayed innocent, and, of consequence, not refused admission into the circles she sighed to shine in. In short, but for the unexpected return of her father, she would have become the self-devoted victim of his Lordship, under the idea that all blame would attach to him; for she is, I understand, extremely tenacious of her reputation; owing, no doubt, to her knowing an untainted one essential to figuring in life. What turn the affair has since taken, I know not, neither what brought her into this neighbourhood; all I know from

the authority already alluded to, is, that she has art enough to deceive any one, since, notwithstanding her real way of thinking, no one can appear more grateful for good advice, or terrified at any danger to her reputation, or impropriety in her conduct being pointed out to her. She is so young, however, that I think one may reasonably hope she is yet reclaimable....'Tis the idea, indeed, of the benefit she might derive from advice from so respectable a quarter (bowing, as she spoke, to Mrs. Dunbar) that induced me to make you acquainted with what I heard of her ; for though I have not any personal knowledge of her father, I yet know sufficient to interest me greatly about him ; and, of course, cannot avoid feeling anxious about what so nearly concerns his happiness, as the conduct of his child.'

'If the precepts of such a father have failed of success, I cannot hope that mine would succeed,' returned Mrs. Dunbar, at once shocked and astonished by the relation she had been listening to. As soon, however, as the subsiding of the emotions it excited permitted her to reflect coolly, she ceased giving implicit credit to it.

Not that she doubted the veracity of Lady Lochness, neither the motive to which she had ascribed her giving utterance to such a tale of scandal against poor Elizabeth, but that she thought she had been imposed upon ; since, when she considered the youth of Elizabeth, and the sequestered life she had heretofore led, she could scarcely think it possible that she could be the artful, the depraved character, she had been represented. Still, however, she reflected that she might be so ; but at the same time decided, though not without many debates with herself on the subject, on not letting any alteration take place in her conduct towards her, except convinced, beyond a doubt, of her depravity.

This decision greatly disappointed and mortified Lady Lochness, and her infamous employer, as they had fully expected that their base allegations against Elizabeth would have been followed by her immediate dismissal from Black Crag ; and thus a speedy opportunity afforded his Lordship of endeavouring to get her into his power again.... In a short time, however, they trusted, if they

persevered in their attempt to injure her character, they should accomplish their wishes.

The disappointment of Delacour, when, on his return from the boating party, he found Elizabeth gone, and the anxiety he evinced to know the cause of her sudden departure, first betrayed to Mrs. Dunbar the nature of his sentiments for her.

Alarmed by the discovery of these, in consequence of the suspicions which had been introduced into her mind respecting Elizabeth, and which her so precipitately quitting her roof had not tended to lessen, she deemed it an incumbent duty to counsel him not to be too hasty in his plans concerning her.

Her 'ambiguous givings out' (for a fear of doing injustice made her unwilling to speak explicitly) so agitated the soul, and inflamed the curiosity of Delacour, that he rested not till he had extorted from her all she wished to conceal. He listened with mingled astonishment and indignation....the respect in which he held Mrs. Dunbar, and which he was perfectly sensible she was entitled to, alone withheld him from reproaching her for giving credit for a moment to the slanders which had been uttered against her whom he adored. He pledged himself to prove that they were the vilest slanders originating in envy; or the wickedness of Lord O'Sinister, with whose libertine turn he was well acquainted, in consequence of being on very intimate terms with his brother-in-law Mr. Beerscroft, who, but not out of any revengeful motive, but merely to prove to the world that the coolness which subsisted between his sister and her Lord was not owing to any defect in her temper, as he tried to insinuate, for the purpose of endeavouring to have his own conduct excused in some degree, never hesitated, to those with whom he was on terms of friendship, to reveal his atrocities.

As a proof of his believing her to have been most cruelly traduced, the impetuous Delacour would instantly have set out for Heathwood, to have made her a tender of his hand, but that this very day, the old Admiral, under whose command he had first served, and who for some time past had been on the superannuated list, had

...a disease of general rheumatism, from his seat, the cabin of a Black Gang, purposely to pay him a visit, and pass some time in his company.

The occasion, which, as a proof of the regard and esteemable heart, would, at any other time, have been not gratifying to the susceptible one of Delacour, now became to him the severest test—so anxious was he to please, to be like his Elizabeth, to the feelings with which she had inspired him, and by so doing, a satisfaction to his aunt's wishes respecting her; for he was well convinced no question of his principles was too trivial, to allow her to imagine his views would be of less value after than a witness of the most unblemished character.

The same affection, which his stopping at Heathwell, to deliver a Black Gang, for the purpose of calling upon a person who had formerly been in the service of the estate, gave him an opportunity of seeing, made a permanent impression on him—such as on discovering, in nature, a person above mentioned, who she was anxious to introduce in endeavouring to introduce herself to her nature. In pursuance of this determination, he thought he would be understood she frequented, and several times her habitation until he had succeeded in his wish, but without ever encountering Mrs. Munro, being in the great caution of his Lordship.

To him, with the innate purity of his taste, the softness of his feelings, a hint, a phrase of affability, a smile, a tear at a moving tale, were (to use the words of our elegant writer) like the Ceres of Cythera, the unassuming beauty, the unaffected simplicity of a child's manner, her sweetness, her gentleness, a heart capable of sympathizing with every individual sorrow, had inexpressible charms...such as were those with which Nature had bestowed her own appearance, and quickly changed the ordinary character into the adoring lover.

The morning after the occurrence which introduced the notice of Mrs. Munro, he meant to have discovered something for her lovely daughter; but, as

may be recollected, had no opportunity of carrying this intention into effect, by being denied admission when he called. Inclination prompted him to remain in the village till he had obtained an interview, but he knew he was expected that day at Black Crag, and could not, therefore, think of obeying its dictates, on account of the pain and anxiety he knew he should give to his aunt, if not punctual to the time he had promised to be with her.

On the rapture with which he looked forward to returning to Heathwood, 'tis unnecessary to expatiate ; or on the damp that rapture received, when led to relinquish his intention of paying another visit to the mansion of Munro, owing to the deception practised on him by the vile Mrs. Elford, respecting Elizabeth....either on the extacy he felt at the detection of that deception : suffice it to say, that the old Admiral having quitted Black Crag, he proposed also leaving it the day alter the masquerade, for Heathwood ; but again resigned all intention of ever more visiting that spot, on discovering Elizabeth and Lord O'Sinister at Glengary. After practising so gross a deception, as he was led, from a variety of circumstances, to imagine she had upon his aunt, he could no longer think her innocent, no longer injured by the charges preferred against her. Yes, it now seemed evident to him, that she merited the imputations cast upon her by Lady Lochness....that she was the guilty creature she had represented her....had left Black Crag, and concealed herself in the neighbourhood, solely for the purpose of carrying on her shameful, her degrading correspondence with Lord O'Sinister....' And yet, if the testimony of looks could be relied on,' he said to himself, as, whilst spite of his resentment and indignation, he was assisting in conveying her from the supper-room, his eyes dwelt with even intense admiration on her face, ' I should, notwithstanding appearances, pronounce her guiltless.'

Doubtful of himself....fearful if he remained much longer near her, he might be betrayed into some proof of tenderness that would give him cause to reproach himself hereafter, with having acted contrary to the dictates

come, in defiance of gout and rheumatism, from his seat, forty miles off, to Black Crag, purposely to pay him a visit, and pass some time in his company.

This attention, which, as a proof of the regard and esteem of a noble heart, would, at any other time, have been most gratifying to the susceptible one of Delacour, now put his patience to the severest test....so anxious was he to give utterance, at the feet of Elizabeth, to the feelings with which she had inspired him, and by so doing, a death-blow to his aunt's doubts respecting her ; for he was well convinced her opinion of his principles was too exalted, to allow her to imagine his vows would be offered to any other than a woman of the most unblemished honour.

The beauty of Elizabeth, whom his stopping at Heathwood, in his way to Black Crag, for the purpose of calling on a person who had formerly been in the service of his father, first gave him an opportunity of seeing, made an instantaneous impression on him....such as on discovering, by means of the person above mentioned, who she was, induced him to determine on endeavouring to introduce himself to her notice. In pursuance of this determination, he haunted the walks he understood she frequented, and hovered round her habitation until he had succeeded in his wish, but without ever encountering Lord O'Sinister, owing to the great caution of his Lordship.

To him, who, from the innate purity of his taste, the tenderness of his feelings, a blush, a phrase of affability to an inferior, a tear at a moving tale, were (to use the words of an elegant writer) like the Cestus of Cytheræa, unequalled in conferring beauty, the unaffected simplicity of Elizabeth's manner, her sweetness, her gentleness, so indicative of a heart capable of sympathizing with every child of sorrow, had inexpressible charms....such as rendered resistless those with which Nature had bedecked her external appearance, and quickly changed the passionate admirer into the adoring lover.

The morning after the occurrence which introduced him to the notice of Mrs. Munro, he meant to have disclosed his sentiments for her lovely daughter ; but, as

may be recollected, had no opportunity of carrying this intention into effect, by being denied admission when he called. Inclination prompted him to remain in the village till he had obtained an interview, but he knew he was expected that day at Black Crag, and could not, therefore, think of obeying its dictates, on account of the pain and anxiety he knew he should give to his aunt, if not punctual to the time he had promised to be with her.

On the rapture with which he looked forward to returning to Heathwood, 'tis unnecessary to expatiate ; or on the damp that rapture received, when led to relinquish his intention of paying another visit to the mansion of Munro, owing to the deception practised on him by the vile Mrs. Elford, respecting Elizabeth....either on the extacy he felt at the detection of that deception : suffice it to say, that the old Admiral having quitted Black Crag, he proposed also leaving it the day after the masquerade, for Heathwood ; but again resigned all intention of ever more visiting that spot, on discovering Elizabeth and Lord O'Sinister at Glengary. After practising so gross a deception, as he was led, from a variety of circumstances, to imagine she had upon his aunt, he could no longer think her innocent, no longer injured by the charges preferred against her. Yes, it now seemed evident to him, that she merited the imputations cast upon her by Lady Lochness....that she was the guilty creature she had represented her....had left Black Crag, and concealed herself in the neighbourhood, solely for the purpose of carrying on her shameful, her degrading correspondence with Lord O'Sinister....' And yet, if the testimony of looks could be relied on,' he said to himself, as, whilst spite of his resentment and indignation, he was assisting in conveying her from the supper-room, his eyes dwelt with even intense admiration on her face, ' I should, notwithstanding appearances, pronounce her guiltless.'

Doubtful of himself....fearful if he remained much longer near her, he might be betrayed into some proof of tenderness that would give him cause to reproach himself hereafter, with having acted contrary to the dictates

of pride and jealous honour, he precipitately quitted the room, as has been already mentioned, on her recovering ; but not without an involuntary farewell glance, expressive of the feelings then agonizing his soul ; and from that moment exerted himself to the utmost, to try and banish her from his remembrance.

Mrs. M'Tulloch, as she had promised Elizabeth, repaired the next day to Black Crag, in order to deliver her letter to Mrs. Dunbar, and undertake her defence. But the arguments she advanced in her favour were disregarded.... Mrs. Dunbar looked upon the story she told her as a fabricated one.... an idea that made her feel still more exasperated with Elizabeth : a short time, however, sufficed to make her change this opinion, and do that justice to Elizabeth she merited.

By degrees she became struck with the particularity of her niece's conduct to Delacour (of whom, however, she had too high an opinion to fear, for a moment, his taking advantage of this too evident predilection in his favour.) and equally so with the encouragement which Miss Rae, by her conversation, gave to the criminal weakness of her friend.

What this young lady's motive could be, for wishing to see involved in ruin and disgrace, a person for whom she professed so high a friendship, was for some time unfathomable to Mrs. Dunbar. At length the mystery became elucidated, and with it the injury that had been done to Elizabeth.

Ruthven, discovering that Elizabeth had set out for Heathwood the morning after the masquerade, took horse the moment he received this intelligence, for the purpose of pursuing her, and endeavouring to recommend himself to her favour.

His career, however, was soon stopped ; he had not got a mile from Black Crag, when, owing to the impetuosity with which he rode, he was thrown, and taken up with a fractured leg. About a fortnight after this accident, as Mrs. Dunbar, according to her daily custom, was entering his chamber one morning, for the purpose of making personal enquiries after his health, she was a good deal surprised at hearing his voice, and that of Miss

Rae's, loud in argument together. Curiosity, perhaps suspicion, caused her to pause at the door ; and she soon heard sufficient, to make her clearly understand how grossly she had been deceived in a recent transaction.

Miss Rae, enraged at the continued coldness of Ruthven, was saying every thing which jealousy and malice could devise, for the purpose of retaliating on him for the mortification he made her suffer ; at once reproaching him with his inconstancy towards herself, and assuring him his libertine passion for Elizabeth would never be successful : and he, in return, irritated by these observations, and bodily suffering, was reviling her for the baseness of her conduct with regard to his wife, and protesting that nothing earthly should keep him from pursuing Elizabeth, the moment he was recovered.

In short, their secret views, and the machinations these had given birth to, became fully developed to Mrs. Dunbar, by the conversation she had thus unexpectedly overheard. The result was, her insisting on the immediate departure of Miss Rae from her mansion ; and directly after, sending for Delacour, to acquaint him with the discovery she had made. Aware however, of what the impetuosity of his feelings would be on this occasion, she would not do more than hint to him, that she had joyful tidings to communicate, until she had received a solemn promise not to let indignation or resentment transport him into any hostile act. In a triumphant moment she revealed to Delacour what she had heard : an open letter, which he had picked up in one of the apartments, a few minutes before he received a summons to attend her, from Lord O'Sinister to Lady Lochness, and dropped there by her Ladyship having proved to him, in the most satisfactory manner, the allegations against Elizabeth being all without foundation, and unfolded to him, besides, the motives to which they were owing.

How extatic would have been the bliss of Delacour at this juncture, at finding the woman, whom he had vainly tried to forget, the pure, the faultless being, he had at first considered her, but that he feared the pride of injured innocence would induce her to reject his renewed address-

ses ; and knew, even if they were accepted, he could not, for some time, make her his wife ; his paternal inheritance not being yet cleared, without the entire possession of which, (a perhaps too generous spirit having involved him in some pecuniary difficulties) he could not give her an establishment of her own ; and till he had the power of rendering her completely independent of her family, he could not think of their marriage taking place. A voyage, however, which he was on the point of going to the East Indies, would, he trusted, enable him, on his return, to arrange his affairs ; and, of consequence, gratify the wishes of his heart, should he be so fortunate as to remove the resentment, he made no doubt, Elizabeth now harboured against him, and, on a candid explanation of his situation, obtain a promise of her hand.

He was not of a temper voluntarily, to submit to suspense ; besides, he was now under an absolute necessity of being at Portsmouth in a very short time. From the dressing-room, therefore, of Mrs. Dunbar, he hastened to give orders for immediate preparations to be made for his departure from Black Crag ; and, owing to the velocity with which he travelled, found himself at Heathwood in less than four hours after he had bidden it adieu.

The feelings which his departure gave birth to in the mind of Mrs. Ruthven, threw her so entirely off her guard, that all she wished, and had meditated with respect to him, became known to almost every individual under the roof of her aunt. The consequence was, that on his recovery, which was slow, and ended in a confirmed lameness, Ruthven took advantage of her guilty passion, to make it a pretext for doing what he had long desired, namely, separating himself for ever from her, and under the conviction that his pursuit after Elizabeth would be unavailing, retiring to the Continent, where we shall drop him entirely ; nor say more of his lady, than that after remaining some time longer with her amiable kinswoman, a torment to her, as well as to every other person about her, she thought proper to withdraw from Black Crag, and join Lady Lochness, who on the discovery of her baseness relative to Elizabeth, had been obliged to quit it, and with her repaired to London ;

where, after a series of dissipated pursuits, she sunk into an early grave, the victim of unruly passions.

Delacour, alighting at the inn, proceeded straightway towards the habitation of Mr. Munro, with an introductory letter from his aunt, expressive also of the happiness she should derive, from an alliance taking place between their families.

His shortest path was through the wood at the rear of the garden ; and, by taking this, he surprised Elizabeth in the manner above related. Ere he had gone through the particulars he had to reveal to her, his fears of finding her inexorable to his supplications for forgiveness, vanished. The timid glances of her now downcast, now half-averted eyes, the warm blushes that melted her cheek, the tremor of the hand he pressed to his throbbing heart, all convinced him he had no reason to despair.

At length he had the happiness of receiving from her lips the confirmation of his hopes. ' And yet,' cried Elizabeth, with a look of ineffable sweetness, and in a voice that perfectly accorded with it, on pronouncing the pardon he so earnestly implored, ' how can those forgive who have not been offended ? for a moment I never ceased to believe, that to the vilest artifices, was owing the prejudice you gave me reason to think you had conceived against me, and of course, could not consider you to blame.'

' How poor, how inadequate, is language to express the feelings this goodness inspires me with !' returned Delacour, in the most impassioned accents ; ' the study of my future life, if so blest as to obtain a favourable answer to my suit, will be to manifest the grateful sense I entertain of it.'

A full disclosure of his wishes followed this declaration. Elizabeth was not surprised...but she was agitated and confused ; and, for a few minutes literally lost in a sweet confusion, that precluded her replying to him. On recovering the power of utterance, she referred him to her father for the answer he required.

' But should he...,should your mother...,should they be disinclined to bestow you on me,' and his hand

trembled almost as much, at the moment, as the fair one it inclosed.

‘My parents have hitherto been most indulgent to my wishes,’ replied Elizabeth, but in a timid accent, and with, again, a downcast eye.

‘But if they should not be so now,’ cried Delacour, his eyes eagerly pursuing hers, and his arm involuntarily circling her waist, ‘for I will, I will, my Elizabeth, put the most flattering construction on what you have just said.’

‘Why then,’ returned Elizabeth, but still shunning his ardent glances, ‘I will....supplicate them to be equally so now.’

‘This instant must terminate my suspense,’ cried Delacour, starting up; ‘if not fortunate enough to find your father within, I trust you will be able to direct me to him.’

Elizabeth could only blush....a few minutes brought them to the house. They found her father and mother in the parlour. They knew not what to think on beholding Delacour, but, whatever might be the purpose which had brought him to their house, they conceived the hospitality which Elizabeth had experienced from his aunt entitled him to their attention. Accordingly they invited him to spend not only that day with them, but to make their house his abode as long as he remained at Heathwood....an invitation which, it may readily be supposed, he did not decline. After a little desultory conversation, and his informing them that he should be able to enjoy the pleasure of their society only another day, owing to the necessity there was for his being immediately at Portsmouth, he requested the favour of a few minutes private conversation with her father, and was accordingly conducted, by him, into his study.

He was not more tedious in explaining his wishes to the father, than he had been to the daughter and had the supreme happiness of finding them equally pleasing to both: his character for bravery and worth, the gallant manner in which he had, on several occasions, signalized himself in the service of his King and Country, was previously known to Munro, and excited a prepossession

in his favour, which his appearance confirming, rendered him delighted at the thoughts of an alliance between him and his Elizabeth; more especially when he reflected on the pangs, he had so much reason to believe, she had suffered on his account. The letter of Mrs. Dunbar was highly gratifying to his feelings. The eulogiums she bestowed on his beloved child, and the sanctions she gave to the wishes of her nephew, were alike flattering to his pride and tenderness.

In a word, he rendered Delacour as happy as Delacour had rendered him, by assuring him his daughter had his free consent to engage herself to him. 'But bless me,' added he, as if suddenly recollecting himself, and with a laughing air, 'here have I disposed of my daughter, without ever once consulting her mother on the subject; well, I don't know that she will absolutely insist on my retracting my promise, but if she should....'

'What, what, my dear Sir,' demanded Delacour, in an agitated tone, all eagerness and anxiety, catching, as he spoke, his hand.

'Why, we'll then try what coaxing will do, and, if that don't succeed, we'll (still more gaily)...but 'tis time enough to threaten when we see cause.'

From the study they repaired to the parlour, where they found Mrs. Munro, but no Elizabeth....she had slipped away to her chamber, whilst her mother, surprised, or rather agitated at the request of Delacour, was gazing after him and her husband, there to remain 'till obliged again to make her appearance.

'My dear,' said Munro, addressing his wife, as he stirred up the fire, 'I have been doing something, which entitles me to what, I confess from you would be a novelty....a lecture.'

'Indeed!....and pray,' smiling, 'what may that be?'

'Giving away something very precious to you, without asking your permission; but, if dissatisfied with my conduct, Captain Delacour, on whom the gift is bestowed, will, perhaps, out of consideration to my domestic tranquillity, permit me to recal it.'

Mrs. Munro looked earnestly in the countenances of both for a minute. 'Ah!' she then exclaimed, 'if it is

what I imagine, with my whole heart I confirm him in the possession of it.'

Her hand was instantly locked between Delacour's, and raised to his lips. 'Yes,' cried he, in accents which spoke the fulness of his heart, 'Mr. Munro has permitted me to look up with hope that your Elizabeth; may I flatter myself that my assurances, of endeavouring in every instance to render myself deserving of her, will induce you to be equally kind?'

'Her father's fond wish and mine,' replied she, 'has ever been, that the filial piety which has always marked her conduct towards us, might be rewarded by her union with a person of congenial disposition. In you, I am inclined to believe she has met a kindred spirit; you may readily, therefore, judge whether you have any thing to fear from me.'

As soon as the grateful transports excited by this speech, in the mind of Delacour, had a little subsided, Mrs. Munro, at his earnest request, went in quest of her daughter, with whom she returned in a few minutes. Munro advanced to meet them, and taking the hand of the timid and blushing Elizabeth.... 'Captain Delacour, your hand,' said he....after he had briefly explained to her the conversation that had just passed between them.

The hand of Delacour was instantly presented to him, and as instantly joined to Elizabeth's. 'In the sight of Heaven,' cried Munro, folding their united hands between his, and looking up, while his wife, at a little distance, with tears not to be suppressed, stood contemplating the interesting group.... 'I solemnly betroth you to each other; as Heaven attests the contract, so may it also bless and render happy your union. Captain Delacour, I give you my daughter, with no other regret, than that which originates in my inability to prevent her going to your arms a portionless bride.'

'Touch not on such a subject,' cried Delacour, impatiently, and with a glow upon his cheek, which heightened the animation of his fine countenance; 'she is a treasure in herself....in giving her to me, you render me not only one of the happiest, but most enviable of men.'

'I trust she will ever prove deserving of your disin-

terested affection ; but, indeed, I have- but little, or rather no apprehension, that she will not, for never yet has she disappointed any expectation I formed of her. Take her, Captain Delacour,' resigning her hand into that of her lover, ' take her with my blessing....my best wishes....my prayers for your mutual happiness : should I not live to witness your union, I shall nevertheless die, rejoicing in the idea of it.'

Of this scene enough ;....suffice it to add, that, for a few hours, a happier set of beings, than were now collected under the roof of Munro, could not have been found ; but then the idea of Delacour's approaching departure recurring to their recollection, threw a damp on their spirits.

The interest which Delacour had excited in the minds of Mr. and Mrs. Munro, was not inferior to that which they had given birth to in his. Although care for years had pressed heavy upon both, and, for a considerable period, they had withdrawn from the haunts of fashion, neither anxiety nor seclusion had impaired their powers of pleasing....the polish of high life was still discernible in both, now united with a pleasing familiarity, and simplicity of manners, perfectly according with, and appearing, indeed, to be the result of their present situation.

Munro could still at times exercise that playful humour, which in the days of his youth and prosperity, had often enabled him to set the table in a roar ; and Mrs. Munro could still laugh at, and take pleasure in listening to, anecdotes of the great world. To the abhorrence in which Delacour had always held the inhuman conduct of old Mr. Munro, was now added astonishment at his being capable of discarding such a son.... so every way calculated to render him happy, and do honour to his name, as was the father of his Elizabeth ; and still further, if possible, was his wish for a union with her heightened, by the amiable relatives he saw he should acquire by it. He anticipated the delight he should experience, if ever in his power, to compensate them in any degree for the injustice of fortune ; and, in his solicitude to do this, found a new stimulus for his adherence to prudence in future.

A party of young people were invited for the evening, and again Munro and his wife had the exquisite felicity of beholding their Elizabeth participating in their amusements, with that cheerfulness which was natural to her.

'Oh, joy, how magical is thy influence !' silently exclaimed the delighted father, as he contemplated the alteration which a few short hours had made in the beloved of his heart....the rich glow which again suffused the cheek that had so lately worn the sickly hue of melancholy, and the liquid lustre that darted from the eyes, but a few minutes back heavy and dejected.

Munro recollected how he had felt when a lover, and in consequence of this recollection, left the lovers to themselves a considerable part of the ensuing day. How supreme would have been the happiness of Delacour during these hours, in which he was thus allowed to engross exclusively to himself the attentions of his gentle mistress, but for the thoughts of the separation that was to take place that night ! He verified, by his feelings on this occasion, the remark, that

'Of all the creatures that exist,
Man only clogs his happiness with care,
And while he should enjoy his part of bliss
With thoughts of what may be, destroys what is.'

The morning was fine, and great part of it was spent in rambling about the environs of the house, through those haunts, endeared by the recollection of having been the scenes where they first met.

On returning from this, it is presumed needless to say delightful ramble, they passed through the chapel, fitted up in the house for the accommodation of Mrs. Munro ; it was of spacious dimensions, its form octagon, and covered with a soft thick matting ; in a deep recess at the farthest end stood the altar, between two gothic windows, chiefly composed of stained glass, and which from the shadow of intermingled cypresses and willows, nourished by a murmuring rill that crept round their feet, cast on them, only admitted a softened light ; all around were vases of rich flowers, shedding an exquisite per-

fame, and forming a beautiful contrast to the sombre hue of the grey walls.

Delacour involuntarily paused to look about him, remarking as he did, that he had no where seen a place better adapted for the purposes to which it was devoted, namely, prayer and meditation.

‘Here,’ cried Elizabeth, resting her hand upon the low railing which enclosed the altar.... ‘here,’ turning a look of ineffable tenderness upon him, ‘will the safety of Delacour often be prayed for.’

‘And here,’ returned he, rapturously seizing her hand, and dropping on one knee, ‘let him pray that he may never cease to merit your supplications to Heaven for him; but with your image, my Elizabeth, enshrined in his heart, it is impossible he should....for, like the angels that attend, we are told, the couch of innocence and virtue, it is calculated to keep far off all thoughts of harm and sin.’

As he knelt, Elizabeth drew from her pocket a long plait of her own hair, united with a small heart of agate, and with a smile threw it over his neck.

‘This goes with me to my grave,’ cried Delacour, as, after holding it for some minutes to his lips, he concealed it in his bosom.

At ten o’clock at night the chaise, which was to convey Delacour away, drove to the door....till then the party within had, by struggling with their feelings, maintained an appearance of cheerfulness, but on its stopping each countenance was in a minute overcast.

Mrs. Munro was the first whom Delacour approached to take leave of; as he affectionately pressed his lips to her hand.... ‘Remember,’ she softly whispered ‘whose happiness you have in your keeping, and let the recollection prevent you from needlessly exposing yourself.’

A look of eloquent gratitude was the only reply Delacour was able to make to this speech.

‘For once, for once, my Elizabeth,’ he softly cried, after pressing her cold trembling hands for some minutes in silence to his heart, a silence, perhaps, more expressive than language could have been, ‘let me be blest by hearing you call me your Delacour.’

‘My Delacour,’ faintly articulated Elizabeth....then, after a short pause, ‘Be....be careful of yourself, for should this be our last meeting, never, never will happiness again be known to Elizabeth.’

Delacour caught her to his bosom for an instant....he strained her to it....then relinquishing his hold....‘Angels watch over you,’ he cried, and darted from the room.

In the hall he found Munro, who, in order to be no restraint upon his feelings on this occasion, had repaired thither ; he could only, however, wring his hand in silence....his heart was too full to permit him to speak, and to hide its emotions he hurried to the chaise, and in a few minutes lost sight of the habitation of his beloved. On reaching London he merely stopped there for the purpose of visiting Mr. Beerscroft, in order to inform him of the engagement between him and Elizabeth, and conjure him to keep a watchful eye over Lord O’Sinister. ‘After telling you she is now my betrothed bride,’ added he, ‘it cannot, I am sure, be necessary to expatiate, or even point out the consequences that must ensue from her being again annoyed by that villainous brother-in-law of yours.’

Beerscroft gave him every assurance he could desire, on the subject....assurances which Delacour knew him too well to doubt his not attending to.

The tender attentions of her parents, and the correspondence she carried on with Delacour till his ship had sailed, gradually softened the sorrow of Elizabeth for his departure. If at times the thoughts of the dangers he was exposed to became too powerful for her feelings, she always sought retirement until she had regained tranquillity, or at least the semblance of it, that thus her parents might be spared the pain of witnessing her unhappiness, and which, just at this juncture, she was well aware, from a pressure of domestic cares, they could ill have supported.

CHAP. X.

' A sudden storm did from the south arise;
And horrid black began to hang the skies ;
By slow advances loaded clouds ascend,
And cross the air their lowering front extend ;
Heav'n's loud artillery began to play,
And wrath divine in dreadful peals convey ;
Darkness and raging winds their terrors join,
And storms of rain with storms of fire combine ;
Some run ashore upon the shoaly land,
Some perish by the rocks, some by the sand.'

DAYD. VIRO.

THE wound of Munro at length assumed so alarming an appearance, that he deemed it expedient to obtain the advice of a professional man of greater celebrity than the one who attended him at Heathwood, and accordingly, for the purpose of procuring this, took an excursion to, while Elizabeth was at Glengary, when it was discovered that the bone of his leg was materially injured....a discovery which, destroying his hopes of speedily, if ever, recovering the entire use of it, reduced him to the necessity of relinquishing his adjutancy, as a situation requiring greater exertions than he was then capable of making.

His resignation of it afforded Lord O'Sinister no little pleasure, as it saved him the trouble of planning a scheme to induce him in one way or other, to give it up, in consequence of his determining not to allow him to retain a situation, calculated to enable him to free himself from the pecuniary obligations under which he had laid him, and thus put it out of his power to pursue the only measure by which he now thought there was a chance of succeeding with Elizabeth....namely, imprisoning him, and making her compliance with his wishes the price of his enlargement.

Munro was grievously disappointed at finding the resignation of his lately-obtained situation, on which he had built so much, accepted by his Lordship without any

offer or promise of another, the supposed benevolence of his Lordship's disposition, united to his knowledge of the disaster which had occasioned him to relinquish it, having induced him to believe he should receive either the one or the other.

He endeavoured, however, to check the feelings this disappointment gave rise to, by reflecting on what his Lordship had promised to do for his son, and the probability there was of his having, from his high rank, and, he concluded, well-known philanthropy, so many, at this juncture, on his list to provide for, as to deprive him for the present of the power of doing any thing for him.

'Yes, I make no doubt,' cried Munro to himself, as he mused on what he imagined the disposition of the peer to be, 'this is the case; neither that should an opportunity again occur of serving me, which, from the situation he holds in life, one may reasonably hope there will, its being eagerly embraced by him; till then I must be patient, for however pressing my necessities may be, God forbid I should either attempt or wish to have any one of his claimants displaced on my account. No, no, I know too well, from painful experience, what the pangs of disappointment are, voluntarily to do any thing likely to entail them upon another.

Yet, notwithstanding his hopes of future friendship from Lord O'Sinister, his firm confidence in his sincerity and benevolence, he could not help at times sinking almost into despondency; nor can this be wondered at, when it is stated, that just at this period his affairs wore a very unpromising aspect, owing to the long neglect which his farm had experienced in consequence of his absence from home, and the state in which he had returned to it. He now beheld no probability of being able to discharge any part of his pecuniary obligation for a considerable time to his Lordship; and although he had not the most distant apprehension of his ever distressing him on account of it, yet he considered life was precarious....his noble friend might suddenly be snatched from this world to the enjoyment of that happiness in the next he so truly merited, and the bond might in consequence de-

volve to some person, not inclined to shew him the same consideration and forbearance he would have done.

These forebodings of evil, however, were not usual with him; he justly reflected they could answer no other end than that of dismaying and dispiriting him from making exertions to ward off what he dreaded; and besides that to doubt the goodness of Providence is assuredly to deserve not to experience it.

But that calmness and cheerfulness which his arguments with himself sometimes failed of producing, the consideration of his children's now smiling prospects, in a moment restored him to; and 'how can I feel unhappy?' was a question he still asked himself whenever they recurred to his recollection, 'how complain of the unkindness of fortune, when in their assured happiness I behold my fondest wishes accomplished?'

The prospects of poor Osmond, however, were but fair in appearance, Lord O'Sinister having decided, from the moment of his exposure to Elizabeth, on not putting him in possession of the promised living. Aware, from the unity which subsisted between him and his family, that to render him independent would also be to render his father so, beside, judging as the villain ever does, from the distrust guilt engenders in the mind, of the truth and sincerity of others by his own, he had not the smallest doubt that Elizabeth would without hesitation expose him to the scorn and resentment he merited, if her brother was once rendered independent of him; he therefore positively determined that he would not render him so, and also on sending him out of the kingdom, if possible, that he might have nothing to dread from his interference or indignation relative to his sister.

Had he done what he wished, he would, immediately on his return from Glengary, have contrived a pretext for removing him from college, and sending him out of the kingdom; but persuaded, from the light in which he was convinced Elizabeth must now view him, that he could not be too wary, too circumspect in his conduct towards her relatives, he decided on controlling his impatience respecting her, and letting matters proceed as he intended they should have done, when he had nearly

made up his mind to giving Osmond the living, trusting that by acting in this manner he should divest her mind of all suspicion of his still harbouring any improper views concerning her, and thus be enabled with ease and safety to entangle the innocent Osmond in his snares.

Accordingly, in pursuance of this decision, Osmond remained the usual time at college, was ordained on leaving it, and invited immediately after his ordination to spend a few weeks with his noble patron in London, previous to his induction to the living, which just about this period the public papers had announced being vacated by the death of its old incumbent.

The affectionate heart of Osmond turned at the moment towards home, which he had not visited since the period he quitted it for college, owing to his inability to incur the expence attending a journey to it: conceiving, however, that it was his duty to obey the wishes of his Lordship, that he should act both ungratefully and disrespectfully, if he did not embrace the opportunity thus afforded by his invitation, of paying him his personal acknowledgments for the obligations conferred on him and his family, he proceeded to London, and met with a most gracious reception from the peer.

His Lordship's residence was in Arlington-street, a sumptuous mansion, and fitted up with all the luxurious elegance of modern times.

But though Osmond was little accustomed to any scenes of splendour, but such as his lively imagination had pictured to him, there was nothing which so engrossed and fixed his attention, as the kind and unassuming manners of his patron, his ready acquiescence to the wishes of others, his apparently incessant and anxious solicitude to render every one about him happy.

As he was one of the most wicked, so indeed was he one of the most artful of men, since to have seen him in his own residence, one might well have mistaken him for a benignant spirit, looking about for opportunities of doing good. As Osmond, before he saw him, conceived him to be one of the best, so now he also considered him one of the most fascinating of men, a man to whom, from the estimation in which he concluded him held, it was an honour to owe an obligation.

Lady O'Sinister and her daughter were both from home ; they were seldom, indeed, inmates of the same mansion with his Lordship ; their absence, for which he assigned a plausible reason to Osmond, did not prevent his frequently entertaining large parties of both sexes ; to these Osmond was introduced in the most flattering manner, as a young gentleman whom he had taken by the hand, for the express purpose of ushering into life ; he, besides, took him every where with him : and thus, from the elegant society in which he now mixed, Osmond soon acquired that complete polish requisite to appear to advantage, and which, indeed, can only be acquired by a constant intercourse with polite company.

He was at this period in his two-and-twentieth year ; Nature had been as prodigal of her gifts to him as Fortune had been sparing of her's ; his heart was the seat of every virtue, his temper even and complacent, his understanding excellent, and highly cultivated ; his genius and disposition naturally inclined him to study ; and he was still further stimulated to the pursuit of literature, by the consideration of a good education being the only fortune his father had the power of bestowing on him, and that too not without inconveniencing himself greatly.

In figure, he was tall, slight, and elegantly formed ; his features were of the Roman cast ; his countenance open, lively, and intelligent ; his smile full of sweetness, his dark eyes of sensibility ; yet mild as was their general language, they could gleam with indignation at insolence, or presumption of any description.

Such was Osmond Munro, when he fell into the hands of this arch-deceiver, Lord O'Sinister ; his letters to his family were filled with eulogiums on his Lordship ; he spoke of him in the exaggerated, the enthusiastic terms which gratitude ever makes use of, when lodged in the warm, the glowing heart of youth. Their transport at finding their confidence in the goodness, the friendship of the peer, justified by his conduct towards him, was unspeakable ; and Elizabeth, the amiable Elizabeth, with the credulity natural to youth and innocence, gave him credit for what he knew not, repentance, and persuaded herself, by his conduct to her bro-

ther, he wished to make atonement for his trespasses against herself.

A happier being than was Osmond Munro at this period, it would have been a difficult matter, perhaps, to have found; he saw himself not only introduced into life as the *protégée* of a man whom every one, he imagined, valued and respected; admired and caressed wherever he went, his gentle and unassuming manners, his innocent and ingenuous countenance, having done that for him in many instances, which the recommendation and notice of Lord O'Sinister would have failed of doing; but secure of a handsome independence, he believed, and consequently of the power of rendering the future days of his family happy: it was his intention to invite them to take up their residence with him in the parsonage-house, of which he thought himself so certain, and which, from the information of his Lordship, he understood to be a most delightful residence, a little terrestrial paradise, situated in the very heart of a luxuriant country, and in the midst of an excellent neighbourhood.

Greatly as he enjoyed the parties he at present mixed in, he not unfrequently stole away from these, for the purpose of indulging the agreeable reflections to which the expected meeting between him and his family gave rise to, of dwelling uninterruptedly on the happiness he should experience, when he found his beloved parents safely housed beneath his roof, diverted from the bitter remembrance of the past, and compensated for the many years of anxiety they had suffered on his account, by his attentions.

'Six weeks, six little weeks, with wings of down had o'er him flown,' when Osmond found himself alone one day at dinner with Lord O'Sinister. The conversation, after the withdrawing of the attendants, happened to turn on the subject of patronage.

'I confess,' cried his Lordship, with the soft insinuating smile he generally assumed when about practising any gross deception, as was the case in the present instance, 'there is nothing I am more tenacious of, nothing I more highly value, than that which, by one means

or other, has been thrown into my hands ; but not from any gratification it affords my pride, but simply from the power it gives me of aiding modest merit, of making amends, in some degree, for the injustice of fortune, of redressing the injuries which, while she retains the bandage on her eyes, the good and the brave will ever have reason to complain of suffering through her means.

‘ But, my dear Osmond,’ perceiving the credulous and delighted youth, from the fulness of his heart, ready to burst forth into eulogiums on him, ‘ I deserve no plaudit for acting in this manner, since, in doing so, I study my own gratification ; and he who, in the actions he performs, has a selfish end in view, merits no eulogium, however meritorious these may be.

‘ Tastes and opinions differ....some men place their delight in public spectacles, in splendour and ostentation, others in sensual gratifications, and again, some in the intrigues of cabinets and courts ; mine consists in trying to promote the happiness of all around me, in endeavouring to prove that Heaven has not bestowed its gifts on an ungrateful object....in seeking out objects impelled and driven backward by the adverse hand of fate, and restoring them to their proper places in society....in supporting drooping and persecuted merit, beneath ‘ the proud man’s contumely, the law’s delay, the insolence of office,’ and finally affording it the means of triumphing over its enemies. O my dear young friend,’ he continued, fixing his eyes upon the swimming ones of Osmond, ‘ I could relate such anecdotes, describe such scenes, as would convince you beyond a doubt, had you one on the subject, which, however, from my knowledge of your disposition, I am convinced you have not, that my pursuits have led me into the right road to happiness.’

‘ Assuredly,’ returned Osmond, ‘ I am indeed well aware of the transport a heart like your’s must experience from contributing to the welfare of others. The greatest object in the universe, says a certain philosopher, ‘ is a good man struggling with adversity ;’ but I perfectly agree with him who says, there is a still greater....the good man who comes to relieve it.’

'Come, come, 'tis an awkward thing,' said the peer, filling his glass and pushing the decanter to Osmond, 'for a man to sit quietly listening to his own praises; I don't know how it was we got into this conversation; let us change it....here's a toast for you, 'May the honest heart never be without a friend to relieve its distress.'

'Amen,' silently but fervently ejaculated Osmond, as he emptied his glass.

'And now, young man,' resumed his Lordship, putting on one of his most familiar smiles, 'permit me to tell you, I shall expect you to use your gun sometimes for me when you go to the rectory, which, if not situated in a country overflowing with milk and honey, is at least in one abounding with game of every description, against which I presume ere this you have been taught to wage war.'

'I confess I have,' replied Osmond.

'I am very partial myself to the sports of the field,' rejoined the peer; 'but *apropos*, whether do you prefer making a longer stay in London, or going down next week to take possession of your living?'

'Since your Lordship allows me a choice, I confess I prefer the latter, so great is my anxiety to see my family.'

Lord O'Sinister nodded, and was about replying, when a servant entered with a letter to him; he immediately broke the seal, but had scarcely done so, when his countenance underwent a total change....he bit his lip....started....rose from his chair....resumed it instantly....in a word, did every thing, calculated to excite a belief of his being under the most violent emotion.

Osmond involuntarily dropped a newspaper, which he had taken up whilst his Lordship was looking over his letter, and almost unconsciously rivetted his looks, full of alarm and anxiety, upon him, convinced, from his seeming agitation, that something most unpleasant had occurred. 'And what a pity is it that so good a man should meet with any thing to trouble him,' he said to himself.

After a silence of some minutes, his Lordship raising his eyes from the letter, turned them upon Osmond, 'I see,' cried he, 'that you are astonished at the emotion I appear in: peruse that,' handing the letter to him as he

spoke, 'and you will then cease to wonder at it; in the meanwhile to excuse me for withdrawing; whenever disturbed, I always retire to solitude till I recover myself.'

He accordingly withdrew, and Osmond read as follows :—

To the Right Honourable Lord Viscount O'Sinister.

'MY LORD,

'It grieves me to be the herald of ill news, but duty often compels us to act contrary to inclination. A few days ago a law process was served on me by the Bishop of 's solicitor, staying your appointment of the Reverend Mr. Osmond Munro to the living, in consequence of his Lordship's laying claim to the patronage of it as his right. I immediately set about investigating the grounds on which he founded this claim. The result of which investigation, I am truly concerned to state, proved to me beyond a doubt the justice of it, and that therefore to attempt any litigation on the subject, would only be to involve your Lordship in unnecessary expence and trouble.

'I have the honour to be,

'My Lord,

'Your Lordship's

'Most obedient humble servant,

'ALEX. M'LAUR

*Lincoln's Inn,
Thursday afternoon.*

A dimness came over the sight of Osmond as he perused this letter, and ere he had well concluded it, it dropped from his hand. All the pleasing anticipations, the delightful hopes in which he had been indulging, were

annihilated by it, and for a few minutes he sunk beneath the shock their demolition gave him.

When a little recovered, through the unrestrained indulgence he gave his feelings, he began to accuse himself of weakness, in having suffered himself to be so completely overpowered by his disappointment.

'True,' cried he, 'it is a most grievous one, for who can deny that it is a grievous thing to be disappointed of the power of rendering a service to those whom we value more than life? but still it is only such as we are all liable to in this chequered state. Shall I then, knowing this to be the case, dare to murmur at experiencing but the common lot of humanity, as if I had a right to expect some peculiar exemption in my favour; shall I attempt to enjoin others to patience and resignation under adversity, as is one of the most sacred duties of my profession to do, while I suffer myself to sink beneath it? No....no, to be satisfied with myself my precepts and practice must ever agree. Henceforward, therefore, in order that I may be enabled to fulfil my duty properly, it shall be my study to acquire such a command over myself, as shall enable me to meet with fortitude and calmness whatever may ensue. How much do I rejoice that Lord O'Sinister did not witness my recent agitation, since I am convinced the sight of it would have considerably encreased his own! Good and benevolent man, how much does he feel for others! by this time I dare say (and as the idea occurred, his heart, which had felt chilled and heavy, began to regain its wonted heat and animation,) he is planning how he may make amends for my present disappointment. Yes, I make no doubt he is,' added Osmond, starting from his seat in an ecstasy of revived hope and expectation, and pacing the room with hasty steps....' yes, I feel assured he will not let me launch into the wide ocean of life, without providing me with some certain port to steer to.'

His Lordship at this moment re-entered the room, his cheek flushed, and from this circumstance his countenance wearing a still more insidious expression than usual.

‘ Well, my dear Osmond,’ cried he, hastily approaching him, and extending his hand, ‘ how goes it with you ?...have you yet got over the shock that confounded scrawl,’ glancing at the fallen letter, ‘ must have given you ?’

Osmond bowed expressively.

‘ Well, I am happy to find you have,’ resumed his Lordship, ‘ since it proves to me your’s is no common mind ; from what I have just felt myself, I can easily conceive what you must have felt : but come, let us resume our seats, for I never stood so much in need of a little of the juice of the grape as I do just now, so much am I cast down and mortified at your being disappointed of a living I had set my heart on seeing you in possession of, not so entirely on account of its intrinsic value, as the comfortable asylum it would have enabled you to afford your family : but let us speak no more of it... to dwell on what we cannot remedy, is, by heightening our vexation, only to render bad worse ; since the bishop has made out so good a title to it, let him e’en keep it quietly, for there is nothing I so abhor as litigation ; all I shall further say relative to it is, that I trust, since he has deprived me of the power of bestowing it on a worthy man, he will mitigate the pain his having done so occasions, by conferring it on one himself.

‘ It is needless, I presume, to say (continued his Lordship, after swallowing a bumper of burgundy,) that I should not have suffered what I have done at its being wrested from me, had I any thing of equal value at present in my gift ; if not ordained, I could have provided for you in a thousand different advantageous ways, but I never had much interest in the church ; still however, I am not quite destitute of the power of serving you.’

At these words the spirits of Osmond, which had begun to droop, became again reanimated.

‘ A particular friend of mine’ proceeded, the peer, ‘ residing in Jamaica, and possessor of considerable estates there, has a living of some value at his disposal ; for which I lately received a letter from him, requesting me to look out for a person worthy of being appoint-

ed to ; I obeyed him, but without being successful in the enquiries I made for the purpose, a circumstance which never occurred to my recollection till, a few minutes ago, when it struck me, you perhaps might have no objection to accepting it, rather than continue in a state of idleness, or hunting after a situation.'

He paused for a reply, but a reply was not immediately in poor Osmond's power to give, since his feelings alike revolted from accepting this offer, and expressing his repugnance to it, lest his doing so should subject him to the imputation of fears he was a stranger to ; not the climate, but the manners he in general understood prevailing there, and the great unwillingness he was convinced his family would feel to his going thither, rendering him averse to the thoughts of visiting Jamaica.

'I perceive, my young friend,' resumed Lord Q'Sinister, after the silence of a few minutes, and with a look of apprehension, (Osmond mistook it for one of tender anxiety) 'that you do not relish the proposal I have just made you ; sincerely sorry am I that I cannot at present make you a more agreeable one, but since I cannot, I think it would be advisable for you to try and combat your feelings in the present instance ; if your objection to going to Jamaica results from any apprehension of the climate, I take upon myself to assure you, that, by adhering to your present regular and temperate mode of living, you may bid defiance to it.'

'No, my Lord, no,' eagerly and warmly, replied Osmond, 'tis not any thing of that nature that renders me averse to doing so, but the uneasiness I am aware the circumstance would occasion my family.'

'I cannot see why it should,' said his Lordship, 'since I think they must be too well informed, at least I am convinced your father must, not to know as well as I do, that provided you act in the manner I have just mentioned, you will be as safe there, with regard to health, as you could possibly be here ; however, if this is your only objection to proceeding thither, I promise to take upon myself reconciling your parents to the measure....so come be candid, my dear fellow ; I am obliged to urge you to an expeditious decision, a fleet being on the point of sail-

ing for the West Indies, by which I think it incumbent on me to send out to my friend, who, by the bye, I should have told you is one of the most amiable of men, in whose society it is utterly impossible a person of any mind can feel otherwise than happy and comfortable ; a candidate for his living, which, should you make up your mind to accept, I beg leave to add, it is not my intention or wish you should retain longer than is necessary for you to save sufficient money to purchase one here, should my exertions to procure you one prove unsuccessful, and which I make no doubt, from what I have heard of it, you will in a very short time be able to do.'

This latter argument had the desired effect upon Osmond ; the hope it suggested of his being shortly enabled, by accepting the present proposal, to acquire the means of settling himself comfortably in his own country, induced him without further hesitation to accede to it, to the inexpressible joy of the peer, who, in removing him from the kingdom, flattered himself he should remove one of the chief obstacles to his designs on Elizabeth.

The friend, in whose praise he was so lavish, was a gentleman of the law, who, for certain mal-practices he had had recourse to in the service of his Lordship, was obliged to make rather a precipitate retreat from his own country. His Lordship, as in duty bound, furnished him with the means of settling comfortably in another. Jamaica was the place he fixed on for his future residence, and where he had not been long, when he succeeded in obtaining the hand of the widow of a rich planter, possessed of large estates in a remote part of the island. The correspondence he kept up with Lord O'Sinister convincing his Lordship his disposition had undergone no change, he decided on throwing Osmond into his hands, with instructions never to let him escape from them to his native country.

His second prospect of preferment did not afford to Osmond the happiness his first had done, since, unlike that, it afforded him no hope of being able to do any thing immediately for his family, or enjoy their society. The idea of his now probably long separation from them, of the anxiety he was convinced they would suffer while he

was away, hung like a dead weight upon his heart, totally depriving him of his spirits.

Lord O'Sinister, but without appearing to notice his melancholy, did every thing in his power to divert it, and prevent reflection, lest it should lead him to retract his promise.

About this period Delacour returned from the expedition on which he had gone to the West Indies. While there, the officer to whom he was next in command died, of course he took possession of his ship, and was confirmed in the command of it on his arrival in England; but at the same time received orders to hold himself in readiness to go out convoy with the East India fleet, then almost ready to sail.

These orders, united to the still deranged state of his affairs, precluded all thoughts of his yet marrying.

Elizabeth, in her reply to the letter he wrote, announcing his return to England, informed him of her brother being then in London, on a visit to Lord O'Sinister, information which afforded him no little pleasure, as he was at that moment on the point of setting out for the metropolis, and had long, from Osmond's near relationship to Elizabeth, and the amiable light in which he was represented, been anxious to become acquainted with him.

Accordingly, he lost no time on his arrival in town, in hastening to pay his compliments to him, more anxious now than ever for an introduction to him, from the solicitude he felt to obtain some intelligence of Lord O'Sinister, which now, except through his means, he despaired of gaining, Beerscroft being absent at this juncture on a visit to a friend in a remote part of the kingdom.

He longed to know whether any thing like repentance had yet touched the hitherto obdurate heart of his Lordship, and which he flattered himself he should be able to gather from the information of Osmond.

Not finding him at home, he left a note, requesting his company the ensuing day to dinner at the Salopian coffee-house.

Osmond was agreeably surprised by this billet, as, from the period he knew of the engagement between De-

lacour and his sister, he was solicitous for his acquaintance. At the appointed time he waited on him, and met with a reception which at once conciliated his regard, and convinced him his sister had been most happy in her choice.

Delacour was equally pleased with him, pleased to find in the brother of her he loved the very kind of being he would of his own accord have selected for a friend, from the exquisite sensibility, yet spirit and firmness, which it was evident he possessed.

Dinner was served in a private room, that they might be under no restraint. As soon as it was over, and they were left to themselves, Delacour indulged himself with a long conversation about Elizabeth, and then gradually introduced the name of Lord O'Sinister, and congratulated Osmond on the fulfilment of his Lordship's promise respecting him.

Osmond received his congratulations with a dejected look and a melancholy shake of the head: the alarm of suspicion instantly took possession of the mind of Delacour.

'What!' cried he, fastening his dark and keenly penetrating eyes upon the suddenly clouded countenance of poor Osmond, while the muscles of his face began to work, 'has he then disappointed you?'

'No, good man, he has not disappointed me,' returned Osmond; 'yet nevertheless,' deeply sighing, as he folded his arms across his breast, 'I have met with a disappointment.'

'Relative to the living he so long assured you of?' demanded Delacour, in an agitated tone.

'Even so,' replied Osmond.

'And by what other means than his could you have experienced a disappointment respecting it?' asked Delacour; 'you really, my friend,' he added, with a forced smile, 'are a little paradoxical; may I entreat you to be explicit?'

Osmond immediately complied with his request. 'So you see,' continued he, after he had explained the way in which he had been deprived of the long-expected living, 'I have been disappointed, but not through Lord

O'Sinister's means. I cannot do justice to the regret he felt at being robbed of the power of fulfilling his promise to me, neither to that he experienced at not being able to offer me at present any better compensation for the provision thus unexpectedly wrested from me, than a living in Jamaica.' Here Osmond disclosed all that had recently passed between him and his Lordship.

Ere he had well concluded, the abominable deception which had been practised on him, together with his Lordship's motives for persuading him to quit the kingdom, became obvious to Delacour; he clearly saw that Lord O'Sinister still meditated the destruction of Elizabeth, and had decided on getting her brother, if possible, out of the way, in order to prevent any interference from him respecting her.

Delacour could not hear of the injuries of a stranger without the liveliest emotion; what his feelings, therefore, were when he beheld any one dear to his regard imposed upon, or in any way ill treated, may easier be conceived than described; the resentment, the indignation, the rage, with which the particulars he heard from Osmond inspired him, were almost too great for controul. Nothing hindered his immediately hastening to Lord O'Sinister, and in the face of day taxing him with the enormity of his conduct, but a dread of the catastrophe the exposure of his guilt might occasion in the family of Munro. What this dread, however, withheld him from doing publicly, he resolved on doing privately, and in the meanwhile on taking immediate steps for rescuing Osmond from the snares of his Lordship.

'You asked me just now,' said Osmond, on concluding his short narrative, 'for a worthy man; I will, therefore, if you please, give you my noble patron, Lord O'Sinister.'

'D....n him!' involuntarily exclaimed Delacour, striking the table as he spoke, with a violence that caused the glasses and decanters to tingle, and the table to be floated with wine.

Osmond, instantly starting from his chair, retreated a few paces from it, surveying Delacour with an inquiring look of astonishment and anger.

Delacour, immediately recollecting himself, also arose. 'My dear fellow,' cried he, approaching Osmond, and extending his hand, 'I ask ten thousand pardons; the truth is, at the moment you gave Lord O'Sinister, I was thinking of a most execrable villain, and so transported out of myself by certain recollections that just then obtruded, that I knew not what I was saying.'

Osmond accepted his apology; a waiter was summoned, and the table being restored to order, they resumed their seats at it.

'So you say,' cried Delacour, again turning his penetrating eyes on Osmond, 'you do not relish the thoughts of going to Jamaica?'

'By no means,' replied Osmond.

'Why then go?'

'For a very sufficient reason, because I have no other alternative.'

'I beg your pardon, you have; the chaplaincy of my ship is not yet filled up, and if you will accept it, till something better offers, which I trust may soon be the case, as my connections neither want inclination nor ability to oblige me, I take upon myself procuring it for you.'

A more agreeable offer than this could scarcely have been made to Osmond, from the prospect it afforded of his being for some time associated with Delacour. Notwithstanding this, however, he hesitated accepting it, till he had consulted Lord O'Sinister on the subject, lest otherwise his Lordship should consider himself ill treated.

Delacour, suspecting to what his hesitation was owing, questioned him on the subject, and finding he was not mistaken as to the cause he imputed it to, said he would not press a decisive answer till the next morning, when he meant to have the honour of waiting on Lord O'Sinister, for the purpose of removing any objections his Lordship might have to his accepting his offer.

Osmond was pleased to hear this was his intention, as he was not without an apprehension that his Lordship might, in consequence of his not having any great

time to look out for another person for the living, be urgent with him to proceed to Jamaica.

The new friends did not part till a late hour ; Osmond returned to Arlington-street, in a much happier frame of mind than when he had left it....again alive to hope and pleasing expectation ; he and his noble host did not meet until the next morning. Just as they were seated at breakfast, and Osmond was beginning to introduce the subject so near to his heart, Delacour sent in his card, with a request for a private audience with his Lordship.

Lord O'Sinister gave orders for his being shewn into the library, and immediately repaired to him, not in the least doubting his visit being for the purpose of soliciting a favour for some friend or acquaintance, an idea that was highly gratifying to his pride, from the light in which he regarded Delacour.

Expecting this, how great was his mortification and surprise at learning the real purport of his visit !

Delacour, but without betraying Beerscroft, gave him quickly to understand he knew the whole of his conduct towards Elizabeth, as well as the detestable projects his designs respecting her had caused him to form against the rest of her family, mentioned the situation he had himself offered to Osmond, for the purpose of rescuing him out of his hands, and finally the engagement subsisting between him and Elizabeth.

'She has been betrothed to me by her father,' said he, 'in the sight of Heaven, and with the consent of her own heart, of course any insult or injury to her, I shall resent as if offered to myself : but even if this were not the case, still would the knowledge of her being the daughter of a brave and worthy man, and innocent and virtuous herself, be sufficient to arm me in her cause. Oh, my Lord !' with increasing emotion, he added, 'when I think of your being a father yourself, and yet meditating such a blow against the peace of a father, as the ruin of his daughter, and the eternal banishment of his son, would have been to that of Munro, I cannot find terms adequate to express the indignation, the horror I feel at your conduct.'

'Upon my word, I....I do not know what you mean,' said his Lordship, but in a faltering voice, and with looks

half averted. 'I do not know why you should suppose that Mr. Osmond Munro's going to Jamaica should occasion his eternal banishment from this.'

'Oh, my Lord!' still more indignantly, cried Delacour, 'do not flatter yourself with a hope of being able to impose on me: I have been more than once at Jamaica, and know perfectly well the character of the gentleman to whom you intended to send Osmond Munro; know well, that he has no such living in his gift as you speak of. I advise you, therefore, for your own sake, to urge his going there no longer, since, should you continue to do so, I shall assuredly wave the considerations that at present withhold me from holding you up to the scorn and abhorrence you merit, and which you would doubtless experience, was your real character known: for dissipated as the world may be, it still is not so depraved as to look with coolness upon crimes like yours: the premeditated destroyer of domestic happiness is, and ever will be, I trust, an object of general detestation. Unhappy man, instead of any longer indulging your vicious inclinations, set about the task of reformation; it is time for it to commence; dismiss your parasites; look in your glass....like your conscience, it will shew you gray hairs and wrinkles, that should warn you to repentance, by convincing you the hour of retribution cannot be far distant.'

The confusion and dismay which seized Lord O'Sinister at the commencement of this harangue, subsided sufficiently ere it was over, to permit him to recollect himself, and enter into a kind of expostulation with Delacour relative to what he had said; he assured him he did him the greatest injustice, in suspecting him of the enormities he accused him of....tried to persuade him it was owing to his being over righteous, not over wicked, he had been so aspersed, 'since envy does merit like its shade pursue;' and concluded by saying, Mr. Osmond Munro was at liberty to do whatever was most agreeable to himself.

'Then this point being settled,' said Delacour, 'I shall take my leave, with assuring you, that the recent conversation could scarcely have been more disagreeable to you than to me: for the sake of many individuals, I

trust one of a similar nature may never take place, between us.'

He then withdrew ; but being a good deal agitated by the recent scene, instead of desiring to see Osmond, left a note, requesting his company as soon as convenient at his lodgings.

Never had any circumstance so mortified, humbled, and enraged Lord O'Sinister, as Delacour's lecture ; yet not so much on account of the light in which it made him view his character, as the wounds it inflicted on his vanity, wounds which the pangs of jealousy rendered still more corrosive, and the absolute despair he felt of ever possessing Elizabeth, till he recollected the length of time Delacour would be absent from England.

Not doubting his being able in one way or other to elude his vengeance, he resolved on availing himself of his absence to prosecute his designs against Elizabeth, a resolution to which he was now, if possible, more stimulated to persevere in, by a wish of being revenged on Delacour for what he had made him suffer, than even passion for her ; he also decided, lest he should not be able to baffle two champions, on doing something calculated to give him such a hold over Osmond, as should prevent his being molested by him, if, on his return from the East Indies, he discovered his conduct towards his sister.

Accordingly, in pursuance of this latter resolution, on rejoining Osmond in the breakfast-parlour, he insisted, after he had, with a smooth brow, and smiling aspect, congratulated him on meeting with a situation so preferable to the one he had offered to him in Jamaica, on his accepting from him a sufficient sum to equip himself for his intended voyage.

'Nay, don't let your pride or delicacy be alarmed,' continued he, with an insidious smile : 'I see you are the ditto of your father, too proud to owe a pecuniary obligation to any man ; in order, therefore, to quiet your scruples in this instance, I shall not object to your giving me your bond for this trifle,' handing notes to him as he spoke for three hundred pounds.

Osmond was all gratitude for this loan ; it had reliev-

ed him indeed from a most painful and awkward embarrassment, as he knew not, from the low state of his finances, how to procure the necessities requisite for his voyage.

Lord O'Sinister, apprehensive, if this transaction was known to Delacour, he might suspect his real motives for the loan, and in consequence occasion, perhaps, its immediate return, extorted a promise from Osmond to be silent with regard to it, for which desiring him to be, he made his own delicacy the pretext.

Osmond enclosed a hundred pound note to Heathwood, in a letter explanatory of all that had lately occurred ; but was prevented expending much of the sum that remained, by Delacour informing him he could get the things he required just as well at Portsmouth as in London ; and where they were no sooner arrived, than he told him he had already provided him with whatever he wanted from his own tradespeople.

The ensuing day the signal for weighing anchor was given ; and, in the course of some hours after, Osmond found himself in company with a numerous fleet, at some distance from the white cliffs of Albion.

Though Osmond had not admired Delacour before, he could not possibly have avoided admiring him now to such advantage did he appear in discharging his professional duties, his natural spirit and urbanity, all the shining qualities of his mind, having in his present situation ample field for exercise ; in a word, he was in every instance what a commanding officer should be, mild but firm, courteous yet reserved ; his officers esteemed him, his men adored him, and peace and good fellowship prevailed throughout his ship.

The season being mild, and the weather remarkably fine, a pleasant intercourse was kept up amongst the fleet : they entered the Bay of Biscay, and Osmond and Delacour were going one day to dine on board one of the East Indiamen, when a homeward-bound vessel coming in sight, Delacour, anxious to send dispatches by it, declined keeping his engagement, but insisted on Osmond's going.

After passing a pleasant day, Osmond was thinking of

returning, when a sudden change in the weather compelled him to give up that intention for the present.

The storm, instead of abating, gradually increased, till its violence became tremendous, and from the mischief it did the vessel, universal terror began to prevail, aggravated by all hope of receiving succour from the rest of the fleet, should it be required, being precluded by the darkness of the night : at length, after several hours of horror, day began to dawn, but only to increase the general consternation, by permitting the vessel to be seen dismantled in every direction, separated entirely from the rest of the fleet, and driving rapidly towards a ridge of rocks on the Spanish coast ; and in a short time there were but few on board who did not think their death inevitable. Of this number was Osmond, and with fervour he recommended his spirit to Him who gave it, and in whose awful presence he imagined himself on the point of appearing ; a few tears dropped from him at the moment, for in imagination he heard the frenzied shrieks, of his mother and sister, the hollow groans of his father, when tidings of this disastrous fate should reach them.

‘ Oh, God ! ’ he mentally exclaimed, as his soul sickened at the thoughts of what their sufferings would be on receiving the intelligence, ‘ support them in the trying hour that brings it to their knowledge ; let them not, I conjure thee, too acutely feel....too deeply mourn my fate,’

The horrors of the scene surpassed any his imagination had ever pictured to him ; the sea rolled tremendously high, the heaving billows, that dashed against the sides of the labouring vessel, threatened every instant to engulf it ; the mingling sounds of the angry elements resembled the doleful shrieks of unquiet spirits ; and issuing from heavy and portentous clouds, the blue and forked lightning now gleamed upon the surface of the troubled deep, now quivered round the vessel, or darted past it, like a threatening meteor from the angry heavens.

At length the ship struck ; the boats were immediately launched, and quickly filled ; but Osmond was not among those they bore from the wreck ; he was an excel-

least swimmer, and, on finding it impossible to gain a place in either of them, resolved on committing himself to the deep, and accordingly plunged into it.

After contending some time with the waves, his strength became exhausted, and he was quietly resigning himself to the fate that seemed inevitable, when a wave suddenly raised him up, and threw him on a rock. For a few minutes he lay incapable of motion, then coming a little to himself, and perceiving the dangerous situation he was in, he made an effort to clamber higher up, and, though not without the utmost difficulty, succeeded in nearly reaching the summit.

Here he again lay some time outstretched and motionless, completely overcome by fatigue and agitation. When again able to raise his head, he cast a look of mingled hope and apprehension towards the sea; the wreck was still in sight, but no other vessel; in which many of the crew and passengers remained, for whose safety the heart of Osmond became agonized.

‘Good God!’ he almost frantically exclaimed, ‘is there no way of saving them?’ He looked eagerly towards the land, but though he beheld an extensive tract of country, he saw not a human being.

That there were inhabitants near the coast, he could not, however, avoid thinking; and flattering himself he should be able by his supplications to induce them to make an effort for the preservation of his fellow-sufferers, he descended the rock as speedily as possible, and on getting, though not without very great difficulty and danger, over some shallows and sandy ridges, which divided it from the main land, struck into a path that appeared to be a beaten one, and was separated from the open beach by a series of beetling cliffs, in which a yawning chasm here and there afforded him an opportunity of still seeing the element, which was so near becoming his tomb.

‘Can I better manifest my gratitude for my narrow escape,’ he said to himself, as humanity and benevolence, spite of bruises, sickness, and weariness, impelled him forward, ‘than by straining every nerve....nay, risking

life itself, for the sake of so many of my fellow-creatures.'

He tried for his purse, and had the satisfaction of finding it still within his pocket, as, by having the means of rewarding in some degree the exertions he required, he trusted he should not solicit them in vain.

The signals of distress, which the vessel had commenced firing from the moment it was in danger, now became more frequent; but in vain did the flash of the guns gleam upon the waves....in vain did the hollow cliffs reverberate their loud report....no one approached the shore.

At length a long interval ensued without their being repeated, and despair, equal to that to which he imputed their cessation, took possession of the heart of Osmond....he dreaded glancing towards the sea; his incertitude, however, in a little time became too agonizing to be borne....he rushed forward to an aperture in the rocks....he shrieked....the vessel was scarcely perceptible....and the next instant two tremendous waves came rolling towards it....they met, they mingled, and overwhelmed it for ever from his sight.

'Oh God!' exclaimed Osmond, as with a deep groan he sunk fainting on the sand.

On regaining his sensibility, he involuntarily raised himself from the ground, and was somewhat pleased and surprised as he did so, to perceive a little sun-burnt black-eyed boy, about six years old, standing beside him, with a countenance full of curiosity.

Osmond had learned a little Spanish from his mother, and, as he patted the head of the smiling child, addressed him in that language, desiring to know whether there was any habitation at hand.

The child listened to him attentively, but, on his ceasing to speak, gave him to understand he did not comprehend him, and this caused Osmond to recollect, that the Spanish tongue in its purity was but little known in the province of Biscay, in which he then was....recollecting, however, at the same time, the constant intercourse that was kept up between the Biscayners and the inhabit-

ants of the other side of the Pyrenees, and conceiving from this circumstance he might know something of French, he tried him in that language.

Again, however, the child shook his head, but at the same moment laughed and clapped his hands, as if much delighted ; then suddenly laying hold of Osmond's arm, pointed to a little distance from them ; and Osmond pursuing the direction of his finger, beheld an elderly man, among the rocks drawing a net to shore.

He immediately approached him, and inferring, from the significant gestures of the child, that he understood French, accosted him in it, and had the happiness of not finding himself mistaken.

The man returned his salutation with much courtesy, and suspending his labour, turned an attentive ear to the relation Osmond proceeded to give him, of the dreadful catastrophe which had thrown him upon his coast ; and on his concluding, said, with a melancholy look, ' that he had the heartfelt anguish of witnessing it ; ' adding, ' that if any hopes had been entertained of being able to save the sufferers, efforts would have been made for the purpose.'

' I see, my friend,' cried Osmond, ' I have been fortunate in meeting with you ; after what I have told you, I am convinced it is unnecessary to tell you I need repose, either, from the manner in which you have expressed yourself, to use entreaty with you to assist me in obtaining it.'

CHAP. XI.

'Since every man who lives is born to die,
And none can boast sincere felicity,
With equal mind what happens let us bear,
Nor joy nor grieve too much for things beyond our care,
Like pilgrims to th' appointed place we tend,
The world's an inn, and death the journey's end.
Ev'n kings but play, and when their part is done,
Some other, worse or better, mount the throne.'

DRYD. PAL. and ANW.

'TRUE, Signor,' replied the fisherman, after what you have gone through, you must, indeed, stand in need of rest, and God forbid that I did not render you every assistance in my power. The nearest inn is at Santillana, about three leagues from this; but if you can put up with homely accommodation, I can give you a lodging in my cottage hard by, as you may perceive, the smoke which rises above yonder clump of chesnut trees proceeding from it.

Osmond, gladly as well as gratefully, accepted this offer, there being an air of good-nature and honesty about the man, that rendered him pleased at the thoughts of obtaining shelter from him.

As he stood waiting beside him till he had hauled in his net, he enquired, but with fear and trembling, whether he could tell him any thing of the boats that had been launched from the wreck?

'Don't ask me, Signor,' was the reply.

'Ah, then,' exclaimed Osmond, clasping his hands together, 'I see how it is.'

'We must submit to the will of Heaven,' returned the other.

'Tell me....tell me,' cried Osmond, grasping him by the arm, 'are you positive of their fate?'

'Well, Signor, since so anxious to know, I will tell you, though sore against my inclination, for I see you are in sufficient trouble already; the boats bulged a little way from the wreck, and all on board perished.'

‘ All !....all !’ repeated Osmond, in a deep and hollow tone, and with a deathlike paleness....‘ all !....all !’ recoiling a few paces.

‘ Come, come, Signor,’ said the fisherman, in a soothing voice, ‘ you should be all gratitude for your own escape.’

‘ I am....I am truly grateful for it, my friend ; but,’ with a burst of sorrow, ‘ I should deem myself unworthy of the life which has been so wonderfully preserved, did joy for its preservation prevent me feeling what I now do. Those whom I mourn I was yesterday rejoicing with. Brave and generous spirits !’ he exclaimed, with hands and eyes upraised, ‘ happy be your rest, glorious your memories ! may the divine Being, who has so suddenly snatched you hence, shed consolation over the hearts of those you have left to mourn you !’

The fisherman having by this time drawn in his net, now took him by the arm, and led him to his cottage, to which his grand-son, the little boy, who had pointed him out to Osmond, tripped before, to apprise his grandmother of the guest she was about having.

Osmond’s reception from her was of the most hospitable nature ; he was too much exhausted, however, to be able to partake of the food she set before him ; and as soon as he had taken some diluted brandy, as a restorative, requested to be shewn to a place where he might lie down.

He was accordingly conducted by his host up a few stairs to a bed-chamber, where, as soon as he was accommodated with dry linen, he was left to his repose ; fatigue soon closed his eyes ; but though his sleep was long, he awoke from it, owing to the anguish of his mind, without being in the least refreshed by it.

Besides being impressed with the deepest grief and horror by the recent catastrophe, his mind was agonized with apprehensions for the safety of Delacour. Unable to endure his torturing reflections, he hastily arose, and dressing himself in the dry clothes which his host, the good Guipuscoa, had left beside the bed, descended to the lower apartment, where he found him and his wife busily employed preparing supper.

Though still disinclined to food, he was so thoroughly convinced, from the manner in which he was pressed to partake of their fare, he should give pain if he refused, that he forced himself to do so. While at table, he enquired of Guipuscoa the likeliest place for obtaining a passage to England, to which kingdom he resolved on returning as soon as possible, and was informed Santillana: he then entreated him to add to the obligations he had already, by his kindness and hospitality, conferred on him, by sending some one there the next morning, to enquire when a vessel would sail, and procure him a few necessaries; and becoming still more pleased with him and his wife, proceeded to ask, whether, if unable to obtain an immediate passage, he would have any objection to letting him remain under his roof till then?

‘Not the least,’ was the instantaneous reply of both Guipuscoa and his wife, who, as well as her husband, pretty well understood him; on the contrary, they should be happy to have him to remain with them, as they thought he would much sooner recover his strength and spirits in their quiet cottage, the only inmates of which consisted of themselves and their little grandson, than amidst the noise and bustle of Santillana.

Osmond having previously given Guipuscoa ten guineas for the purchases he required at Santillana, retired to bed somewhat composed, from the hope he now entertained of being speedily on his way back to England, and the arrangement he had made with Guipuscoa; it was soothing, it was consolatory to him, to think he was with beings appearing to take an interest in his fate. Hitherto accustomed only to the soft and gentle offices of friendship, the tender endearments of love, to attention, and affection on every side, he was aware how dreadfully the anguish of the present hour would have been aggravated, had he been cast among strangers incapable of sympathising in his sufferings. Since destined to meet with such a misfortune, he blessed Providence that it had befallen him in a place so famed for hospitality and humanity as Biscay; in short, by reflecting that his situation might have been much worse, he reconciled himself to its not being much better.

The next morning, just as he opened his eyes, Guipuscoa entered the chamber, with the things he had procured him at Santillana, and the transporting tidings of the fleet he was so interested about being seen by a brig just come into port there, steering in safety through the bay.

This intelligence had an immediate effect upon Osmond....an oppressive weight was instantly removed from his heart....the ashy paleness of his cheek vanished....his heavy and half-closed eyes brightened and dilated....his step again became firm and elastic.

As soon as the extacy it occasioned him had a little subsided, he learned that no vessel was expected to sail from Santillana for England in less than a month.

This information would have chagrined him much, but for that which had preceded it; rejoicing as he did at the removal of the apprehensions he had entertained for the safety of Delacour and his brave companions, there was nothing almost at the moment immediately concerning himself, which could materially have affected him.

Guipuscoa delivered him the purchases which had been made for him, and which came to a less sum than he had received; Osmond, however, not only refused the overplus, but insisted on his acceptance of five guineas.

Guipuscoa expressed himself greatly surprised at his thinking so much of the kindness he had experienced from him; 'for surely, Signor,' observed he, 'tis only such as a poor shipwrecked stranger might be sure of meeting in any part of the civilized world.'

'For the sake of humanity I will hope so, my friend,' replied Osmond; 'but the idea, that elsewhere I might have met with similar kindness cannot lessen my gratitude for that I have experienced from you; he would be unworthy of a favour, who made light of one, from the consideration of its being only such as another might have conferred on him.'

The revolution in his feelings enabled Osmond to do greater justice to his breakfast than he had done to his supper; and in the course of another day, owing to the

kind and unremitting attentions of his host and hostess, and the tranquillity diffused throughout his mind by the knowledge of Delacour's safety, and the pleasing hopes he entertained of finding Lord O'Sinister as well inclined as ever to serve him on his return to England, found himself sufficiently recovered to take a ramble about the environs of Guipuscoa's cottage.

He was an enthusiastic admirer of the scenery of Nature, particularly of such as displayed those bold and prominent features, that at once arrest the attention, and furnish the imagination with new images. The grand and the sublime, however, did not entirely engross his admiration....the lowly violet shared it with the branching tree, whose root it tufted....the sterile rock, with the cultured hill, bedecked with flowering umbrage....the winding valley, with the cloud-capt mountain fading into ether.

In all he saw, he traced a hand divine, and was therefore furnished by all with 'food for meditation,' with incentives to praise and worship him, the lowest of whose works proclaim his goodness beyond thought and power divine.

How any mind in the least enlightened could contemplate the wonders of creation, the various blessings with which it abounds for man, without feeling gratitude and devotion to the Creator, was a lasting source of astonishment to Osmond, such as sometimes inclined him to believe this could not be the case; yes, often, from the elevated feelings of his own mind, he was almost tempted to think it impossible that any being endued with intellect could gaze upon the glorious canopy extended over him....could tread upon the verdant carpeting spread beneath the shadow of the trees, nourished, as if purposely to afford him shelter, by the dews of heaven, and luxuriate; in the grateful changes of the seasons, without thinking of and magnifying the Author of all.

Osmond was, in short, one of those for whom

'Lo, not an hedge-row hawthorn blows,
Or humble harebell paints the plain,
Or valley winds, or fountain flows,
Or purple heath is ting'd in vain.

For such the rivers dash the foaming tides,
The mountain swells, the dale subsides ;
Even thriftless furze detains their wand'ring sight,
And the rough barren rock grows pregnant with delight.*

Though naturally lively, and animated in the extreme, he nevertheless was at times inclined, as characters like his, endued with exquisite sensibility, almost ever are, to melancholy and lonely musings ; he delighted sometimes to abstract himself from society, to plunge into the gloom of vast embowering shades, for the purpose of indulging in those waking dreams, at once so delicious and peculiar to feeling and to genius.

The scenery by which he was now surrounded was perfectly adapted to his taste....a happy mixture of sea and land, hill and valley, wood and water, wearing just a sufficient air of wildness, to excite ideas of the sublime.

The hamlet in which he had found refuge, consisted of a number of cottages scattered amongst deep hollows, and o'er the hills they intersected, and which enclosed for a considerable way on either side a broad deep road, open to the beach, and winding away amidst gradually aspiring mountains, crowned with stately forests, or covered with cantabrian heath, gorze, and impenetrable thickets of the shrub called argoma, into the heart of the country : an old gothic-looking church, in the midst of a spacious grass-grown enclosure, was the only edifice of any consequence in it ; neatness and simplicity alone distinguished the others, truly gratifying to the eye of benevolence, from the assurance they gave of the comfort and happiness of the inhabitants.

From all he saw, from all he heard, Osmond was convinced that here, if any where, both were to be found without alloy. But how could it be otherwise, he considered, where nature and reason were the guides, where enervating luxury and frivolous dissipation still remained unknown ?

In the hamlet where he lodged, and he understood the same to be the case throughout the province, the hour of labour over, the young men and women, the former well built and active, like all mountaineers, the latter tall,

light, and merry, their garb neat and pastoral, their hair falling in long plaits down their backs, their heads ornamented with a veil, or handkerchief, twisted round them in a very coquetish and becoming manner, assembled upon some pleasant spot among the rocks, to dance to the sound of the pipe and tabor, while the more aged amused themselves with looking on, and preparing refreshments.

Osmond more than once accompanied his host to be a spectator of their amusements, and more than once was invited by the intelligent dark eyes of the young female cottagers to join in the dance, but from which he was still withheld by painful remembrances ; though he could return their smiles and their glances, worlds could not have induced him to dance within sight of the waves which had proved fatal to so many gallant spirits.

Not unfrequently the sight of the waves awakened reflections that obliged him to steal away from the crowd. On those occasions he generally wandered up the road amidst the mountains, or struck into some of the rich and variegated woods of oak, beech, and chesnut, which shaded their acclivities, and partially screened the corn-fields, that extended in various directions o'er their summits.

But the gaiety which he was thus at times, owing to the sudden obtrusion of painful thoughts, compelled to fly from, was notwithstanding delightful to him, from the proof it afforded of the happiness of so many of his fellow-creatures ; with an exquisite sensation he listened to its softened sounds, and hoped such might ever be the prevailing ones in this happy quarter.

He had been about a week an inmate of the fisherman's cottage, and was returning to it one morning from a long ramble, when his attention was attracted by a number of both sexes assembled in the middle of the village, evidently in great consternation. From his ignorance of the language, however, not being able to make out the cause of this, he proceeded homeward, after pausing for a minute or two to observe them, and was followed by Ines, his hostess, who, from the midst of the crowd,

had espied him. Of her he enquired the cause of the tumult ; and, in her broken French, received the following particulars :

‘ You have taken notice, I presume, Signor, of the great mount in our chapel-yard ?’

‘ Yes, I have not only noticed, but more than once clambered up it, to have a better view of the adjacent country ; ’tis a place of interment, I presume ?’

‘ It has been, Signior, but not for a considerable period : it is, as you imagined, not only hollow within, but of immense depth. There came, as the story goes, a hundred or two years ago, two famous warriors to this village, for the purpose of sea-bathing. They had not been long here, when one of them sickened and died. On the day on which he was to be buried, a large body of soldiers made their appearance, and broke an opening into the cave, for the purpose of interring the body there.

‘ Amongst many other strange things they did on this occasion, the country people were not a little astonished at seeing them bury a quantity of provisions, both for man and beast, along with the body ; and still more, as you may suppose, at seeing the other warrior, armed cap-a-pee, and mounted on his horse, descend into the vault, and immediately after the entrance was closed up.

‘ For this strange and unnatural act, the soldiers accounted by saying, that, owing to some particular circumstance, the two warriors had many years before taken a solemn vow, whether living or dead, to be interred at the same moment ; and that the provisions which had been deposited in the vault, were for the purpose of keeping the survivor alive for a certain time, and thus enabling him, like an honourable Knight as he was, to watch over, and prevent the body of his friend from being entered by any one of the evil spirits, or enchanters, against whom they had both been so long waging war, lest, if possession was taken of it by one of these, it might be made to undo all the great and glorious things it had achieved in life, while animated by its own good spirit.... The soldiers moreover commanded that the vault should not be opened again, threatening the inhabitants of this

hamlet with misery of every description, if they ever permitted it to be so.

‘ This threatening had the desired effect. Generation after generation has passed away, without any one thinking of acting in defiance of it. The villagers, therefore, can no otherwise account for the doleful cries which, in the course of this morning, have repeatedly been heard from the tomb of the warriors than by supposing some one or more of the evil spirits, or enchanterers they so annoyed while living, have at length obtained access to it, for the purpose of being revenged for all they made them suffer.’

‘ What, revenged on a parcel of bones !’ demanded Osmond laughing at the simplicity and superstition of the good woman.

‘ Yea, Signor,’ she replied, ‘ by taking possession of them ; for the bones may still be sufficiently connected to afford them a habitation : at least such is the opinion of an old woman, who lives in yonder wood ; and she advises, in order to have an end put to the wicked projects of these said evil spirits, or enchanterers that some one should enter the cave, for the purpose of dismembering the skeletons, in such a manner that nothing could lodge within them ; but as yet, no one has been found hardy enough to undertake the business.’

‘ Well,’ said Osmond, not doubting but that some unfortunate creature had fallen into the cave, to whom, if immediate assistance was not rendered, death might be the consequence, ‘ I have not the least objection to volunteer my services on this occasion.’

‘ Is it possible, Signor ?’ cried Ines, in a joyful accent.

‘ It is very true,’ replied Osmond...Where is your husband ?’

‘ With the rest of the villagers, Signor.’

‘ And is he entirely of their way of thinking with regard to the present affair ?’

‘ Why, I dont know, Signor. I rather believe he is at a loss what to think.’

‘ Well, hasten said Osmond, ‘ and make known my offer.’

Ines obeyed, and presently returned with Guipuscoa, and several of the other villagers, equally surprised and delighted at having found a voluntary champion, since, in the light of one they could not help viewing the person who consented to enter the cave, from the smart scuffle they were convinced, he would have within it.

Osmond having provided himself with a bottle of vinegar and another of brandy, proceeded to the cave, and descended into it by means of a ladder, passed through an aperture, discovered towards the summit, followed by Guipuscoa, who notwithstanding his disinclination to the adventure, could not think of letting a person, so immediately under his protection, as he conceived Osmond, enter into any danger he would not himself share.

Osmond, on reaching the bottom of the cavern, paused, in order to look around him; but the light emanating from a lanthron he carried, was too faint to permit him to see to any distance. He therefore began slowly to advance, closely followed by his host.

After proceeding some way, he was beginning to imagine himself mistaken with regard to the conjecture which had induced him to enter it, in consequence of neither hearing or seeing any one, when a faint moan reached his ear, to the infinite terror of Guipuscoa, as was evident from his crossing himself, and making an immediate movement towards the ladder; whilst Osmond hastened to the spot, whence the distressing sound proceeded, and discovered a man stretched upon the ground, with his face upwards, and from the deadly paleness of which, united to his eyes being closed, Osmond, at the first glance would have been tempted to believe him dead, but for a quivering motion he saw about his lips.

Having by the coldness and dampness of his forehead, ascertained his being in a swoon, and at the same moment perceived one of his hands bleeding, he called to Guipuscoa for assistance, which, his superstitious terror being somewhat subdued by learning the object for whom it was required, he approached to give with great readiness.

While he bound up the wound, Osmond rubbed the temples of the poor sufferer with the vinegar he had so luckily brought with him, and occasionally held it to his nostrils. In a little while he had the satisfaction of perceiving him move, and open his eyes, but which he almost instantly closed again, as if completely overcome by weakness. It now occurred to Osmond that he had probably been a long time in the cavern; and that from the consequent exhaustion of his frame, owing to want of food, consequences might ensue, if removed thence, till he had, in some degree, been recruited by nourishment.

This surmise being communicated to Guipuscoa, he produced some biscuit, which being sopped in brandy, and gradually insinuated between the lips of the stranger, by degrees had the desired effect of restoring him to some degree of warmth and animation: in a little while he again opened his eyes, and after wildly staring about him for a minute, enquired in Italian, in which language Osmond was perfectly conversant, where he then was?

‘Till you obtain the repose you so much require, be satisfied, I entreat you, with knowing,’ said Osmond, ‘that you are in safe and honourable hands.’

The stranger slightly bowed his head, and being raised from the ground by Osmond and Guipuscoa, was, between them, assisted up the ladder; but great as was the difficulty they found in getting him out of the tomb, they found still greater in getting him through the crowd assembled round it, so anxious were the villagers to learn who he was, and what had brought him there.

That he was a person of no common note, Osmond was convinced from the richness of his habiliments. He appeared about his own age; and though not remarkably handsome, had something extremely interesting in his looks.

On reaching the habitation of Guipuscoa, Osmond put him into possession of his own bed; and after giving him a little warm and diluted brandy, left him to his repose. On descending to the lower apartment, he felt himself so oppressed with a head-ache, owing to the foul and damp atmosphere he had breathed in the cavern, that he was under the necessity of getting into the air, but informed

Ines of the road he meant to pursue, that in case the stranger awoke ere his return, and wished to see him, there might be no delay in finding them. He was absent about an hour, during which his thoughts were occupied in reflecting on the strange incidents that sometimes occur in life, when he heard himself called by his hostess : he immediately hastened to her, and learned that the stranger had risen, and enquired for him.

‘ When first he began to speak to us, Signor,’ said she, ‘ we did not understand him, which perceiving, he had recourse to French. He told us a great deal about himself, but which, as he will doubtless tell you the same, I shall not repeat. He also asked a number of questions about you, which we answered to the best of our ability, and he seems quite impatient to see you, which, to be sure, one can’t wonder at, since, under Heaven, you have been the preserver of his life. Poor gentleman, what a piteous death would his have been, had he been left to perish in the tomb of the warriors !’

On entering the cottage, Osmond found the stranger seated at a table, with refreshments before him, and Guipuscoa attending.

‘ Noble, Sir,’ cried Ines, hastily advancing before Osmond, and curtseying low, ‘ here is the gentleman you wanted to see.’

‘ Ah ! how unnecessary to tell me so,’ returned the stranger with vivacity, yet all the characteristic softness of the Italian.... ‘ ah ! how unnecessary,’ rising as he spoke, ‘ since I well recollect, and ever shall, that face of true benevolence ! O, my dear Sir,’ advancing to Osmond, and taking him by the hand, ‘ words are inadequate to express my feelings on the present occasion....the gratitude I feel for the exertions you made to restore me to myself ; but for you, I should in all probability, have fallen a victim to the lingering tortures of famine. What will not be the gratitude of my relations and friends, when they learn the obligations I owe you : add to these, I implore you, by giving them a personal opportunity of testifying the same. These worthy folks,’ glancing at Guipuscoa and his wife, ‘ have informed me of the misfortune you met with ; accompany me, therefore, I entreat you, from

hence, and remain with me till you can conveniently return to your own country. In the name of my family, I invite you to the Castle of Acerenza, taking upon myself to assure you, that as the preserver, the guardian angel of its heir, were you less qualified than I now perceive you are, to conciliate esteem and admiration, still would every attention, calculated to render you happy, be paid you there. You may possibly have heard of the ancient and illustrious house of Placentia, in Italy :...to prove to you, that with respect to rank, I am not unworthy of the favour I solicit, permit me to inform you, I am the representative of that house.'

Osmond bowed, and expressed himself highly flattered by the anxiety his Lordship manifested for his company; and which nothing, he assured him, but his own to return to his native country, should have prevented his gratifying.

'Nay,' replied the Count, 'that cannot possibly be an obstacle, for I have enquired into all matters, and learnt that you cannot obtain a passage from Santillana for England in less than three weeks at soonest; so that there is nothing but want of inclination to prevent your passing a little time with me in Italy: perhaps you may be induced to do so, when I inform you that Acerenza, whither I purpose returning by sea, in order to avoid the trouble and fatigue of a land-journey, is contiguous to the Bay of Tarento, whence there are continual opportunities of embarking for England.'

This latter assertion had the wished for effect upon Osmond; when he found his return home would not be retarded by his accepting the polite and pressing invitation of the Count, he ceased to have any hesitation on the subject. The prepossession he had conceived in his Lordship's favour making him anxious to enjoy a little of his society, and the descriptions he had received of Italy, to see something of it.

His compliance with his request threw the Count into raptures that were absolutely extravagant; and Osmond soon perceived he was one of those characters that feel nothing in moderation. His animated looks on the occasion formed a striking contrast to the clouded ones of

Guipuscoa and his wife, owing to their chagrin at the thoughts of losing their young guest, so great a favourite had he become with them.

Osmond made a remark in Italian to the Count on the circumstance.

‘ Ah, dear, worthy, precious, inestimable souls !’ instantly exclaimed the Count, turning with quickness from Osmond, and placing himself between them : ‘ yes, I confess,’ addressing himself to them, and taking (having but one hand to use) first Ines’s, then her husband’s, ‘ I am about robbing you of your amiable guest ; to reconcile you to such a measure is not, I am certain, in my power ; do not therefore be offended, by supposing I offer you this (pulling out a richly decorated and weighty purse) from any other motive than gratitude.’

Guipuscoa, with a shake of the head, positively refused accepting the proffered gift, and Ines followed his example.

‘ Very well, very well,’ cried the Count, ‘ I shan’t press the matter. I shall only say that you accept it, or the next minute sees it committed to the waves.’

‘ Why, to be sure your Lordship could never think of such a thing,’ said Ines, but in rather an apprehensive tone, and sideling towards the door.

‘ As sure as I have just risen from the grave,’ returned the Count.

‘ Oh then, if that be the case,’ cried Ines, ‘ why, Guipuscoa, rather than let him fling it to the fishes, to which it can do no good.....’

‘ You would have him fling it into your lap,’ interrupted her husband. ‘ Well, well, if he must fling it away, why, let him do so ; but I would much rather see it returned to his own pocket : for I see nothing we have done to merit such a reward as he offers.’

‘ Every thing ! every thing, my noble fellow !’ exclaimed the Count, first dropping his purse into the hand of Ines, and then clapping him on the back. ‘ In the first place, were you not kind to my guardian angel here ? and, in the second, did you not exert yourself to prevent my soul flying away, and leaving my body to be returned to the tomb of your warriors....which, by the bye, I wish,

my good friend, had been transported to the top of Mount Teneriffe, ere I came into its neighbourhood : for, deuce take me if I believe Apollo himself received a greater shock in his tumble from the celestial regions above, than I did from mine into the infernal regions below.*

He then, on Osmond's expressing a wish to be acquainted with the particulars of his recent disaster, proceeded to relate, that he left Santillana, where he had been lodging some time, the middle of the preceding day, for the purpose of taking a stroll about its romantic environs ; that charmed with their beauty, he wandered on almost unconsciously till he came to the church-yard, and in scrambling up the mount where the old warriors were interred, in order to have a more extensive view of the adjacent country, either stumbled upon, or made himself a chasm in it, through which he fell ; that, for a considerable while after, he was so stunned by his fall, as to be unable to make any effort to have himself extricated from his disagreeable situation ; and that soon after he had regained the use of his faculties, he was again deprived of them by pain and weakness.

His short story finished, he again addressed Guipuscoa, intreating him to have the goodness to send some one immediately to Santillana, for the purpose of procuring a carriage, and quieting the apprehensions of a valet, whom he had left there, and, by this time, was in absolute despair about him.

The good-natured Guipuscoa lost no time in complying with his request. On his return from his errand, he assisted his wife in preparing a repast, which the Count partook, with Osmond, and spent the time with a vivacity that, all this while, he had ed a degree of surprise to Osmond, who had forbore expressing ; but in the evening, when he was supposing it to proceed from a more than ordinary exertion over his feelings.

‘ Ah, my dear friend,’
 ‘ I would give half my
 flattering opinion yet
 to happiness is, I—

lude to over one's self ; but the truth is, instead of being exactly what you suppose, I am rather too much governed by circumstances ; but whether owing to my being generally unprepared for those that occur, or to more than usual delicacy of nerves, or susceptibility of disposition, I cannot positively determine ; I, however, rather think to the former ; and this inclines me to believe, for I have deeply considered the subject, that we should be not only happier, but, in general, more rational than we are, was our knowledge of events not limited to the present moment ; by foresight by being permitted to see the course that destiny will take, we should be prepared for the various vicissitudes of this life, and of course enabled to support them with propriety : for the light that comes upon us by degrees does not dazzle, neither does the storm that gives intimation of its approach appal us, like that which bursts with sudden fury o'er us. With what moderation would he enjoy his prosperity, who beheld a dismal reverse approaching ; with what diligence be prompted to improve the flying hours, by seeing the inevitable term drawing near which was to finish his career ?

‘ Pardon me, my Lord,’ said Osmond, ‘ for acknowledging a difference of opinion in the present instance. Was this (by many coveted) fore-knowledge granted, it is my firm opinion, that it would prove the most fatal gift the Almighty could bestow upon us. If the successive scenes of distress which we are all more or less destined to go through were laid before us in one view, perpetual sadness would overcast our lives ; hardly would any transient gleams of interposing joy be able to force their way through the dark and portentous cloud ; faint would be the relish of pleasures of which we foresaw the close. Ask your own heart, my Lord, did you ever thoroughly relish a happiness, the termination of which you foresaw ?.... Insupportable would be the burthen of affliction, with which we should find ourselves oppressed by the union of present with anticipated sorrow. Friends would commence their intimacies with lamenting the hour that was to dissolve them, and, with weeping eye, the parent would every moment survey the child whom he knew he

was destined to lose. In short, was that mysterious veil that now covers futurity lifted up, all the gaiety of life would instantly, I am confident, vanish....its flattering hopes, its pleasing illusions, and nothing but its vanity and sadness remain.'

'By Heaven!' exclaimed the Count, rapturously, and after listening with the most profound attention to him, 'you have thrown a new light on the subject. Ah! I now see....yes, I am thoroughly convinced; my ideas on it were erroneous; and were it possible to wish for your society more than I previously did, I should now do so, from the arguments you have just advanced; for, be I what I may, I have still ever delighted in the converse of the wise and virtuous.'

Osmond bowed and smiled. 'To some speeches, my Lord,' said he, 'there is no making a reply.'

Soon after the arrival of the carriage the Count had sent for to Santillana, he and Osmond took leave of the good fisherman and his wife. At the moment of parting, the latter slipped five guineas into the hand of their grandson, aware that to have offered it to them would have been useless.

During the short ride to Santillana, the Count, notwithstanding the languor his recent accident occasioned, continued to converse with the same vivacity he had displayed in the cottage of the fisherman. He was so exhausted, however, by the exertions he made to do this, that on reaching the inn at Santillana, where he lodged, he was compelled to lie down.

The evening not being far advanced, and the next morning fixed for their departure, Osmond availed himself of the opportunity this circumstance afforded him to view the town, accompanied by Antonio, his Lordship's valet, in the capacity of guide, and whom as the Count had predicted, the reappearance of his master had rescued from absolute despair.

On returning from his ramble, which afforded him much amusement, Osmond found the Count up, and awaiting him to an elegant supper. That it was complaisance alone, however, which had induced him to rise, was so evident to Osmond, that he did not suffer him to continue long at table.

The next morning, after an early breakfast, they embarked, for the Castle of Acerenza. The Count had engaged a vessel to himself, and nothing was omitted that could render the voyage pleasant.

Both his companion and every thing on board ship must, however, have been the exact reverse of agreeable, to have prevented Osmond from enjoying a voyage that afforded him an opportunity of viewing the varying and enchanting shores of the Mediterranean.

From objects without, his attention, however, was soon in a great measure, diverted by that which the conduct of the Count excited. He had not been many days on board ere he began to evince a variableness and inconsistency in his manner and actions, which greatly surprised Osmond.

From being all life and spirits, he would suddenly fall into fits of deep musing, assume by degrees a vacant air, and prove that he was indeed abstracted from all surrounding objects, by the wild emotion he betrayed if suddenly addressed. At first Osmond imputed this changeableness to caprice, but minute observation shortly convinced him that he was wrong in having done so, that to some secret sorrow it was alone owing; but what the origin of this sorrow could possibly be, he was at a loss to conjecture, since from appearances, as well as the Count's own assertions, he was led to imagine him in possession of all that is generally reckoned essential to felicity.

'But so it is,' said Osmond to himself, as he mused upon the subject, 'by one means or other we are all brought to a pretty equal level with regard to happiness; the poor have their comforts, the rich their cares; and much seldomer than it is, would envy be excited, did we more narrowly examine into the condition of one another.'

With respect to himself, the Count's behaviour knew no variation; for an instant he never relaxed in his attentions to him, nor ceased repeating that, for a long, long period before, he had not been so happy as since he had had him for a companion. 'But in this, as in every other instance,' said the Count, following up this assertion, 'one day, I make no doubt I shall find my happiness

as fugitive as it has hitherto been. Ah ! my dear friend, how dreadful is the destiny of some men ! how dreadful the reflection, that when once planned, it becomes immutable !

‘ I hope you are not a predestinarian, Count,’ cried Osmond ; ‘ since from the wretchedness I am persuaded he must feel who is, the erroneous ideas he must harbour of the goodness and justice of Providence, I should regret to think you were. We are led to believe we must hereafter answer for our actions, but how could we bring ourselves to think our doing so just or reasonable, if, in our journey through life, guided by fate, not inclination ?’

‘ Assuredly, assuredly,’ exclaimed the Count, with quickness, and starting from a thoughtful attitude, ‘ my dear friend,’ grasping the arm of Osmond ; ‘ how just are your sentiments on every subject ! Uncommon pains must certainly have been taken with you. I have received a good education myself....indeed, the first Italy afforded....but still, compared with you, find myself extremely deficient.’

But only owing, Osmond was convinced, to there having been no certain rules laid down for his guidance. To the want of these he imputed the fluctuating state of his opinions, manifested by his ready acquiescence to those of others, the sudden changes in his temper and transitions in his humour....like a ship which, when turned adrift, rides at the mercy of the wind and tide, he saw him, in consequence of being untaught to govern himself, the alternate sport of fancy and passion, now magnifying a mole-hill into a mountain, now sinking a mountain into a mole-hill.

More than once Osmond thought he seemed inclined to repose unlimited confidence in him ; but though, as may naturally be supposed, not without curiosity to know the cause of his uneasiness, he made no effort to encourage him to do so, conceiving their intimacy not sufficiently long to warrant his making an attempt to pry into his secrets ; and besides that, nothing could justify a man’s seeking to discover the concealed sorrows of another, but a thorough conviction, on his part, of having the power of administering consolation to them.

They were seated, one evening, in the cabin, at an open window, which afforded them an opportunity of seeing the 'Queen of the silver bow' rising high in the heavens, and silvering with her bright beams the swelling waves, when the Count, after a thoughtful pause of some minutes, suddenly exclaimed....

'How delightful is this scene !....and hark, the mariners begin their evening hymn to the Virgin, as if, Chevalier, like your poet, Shakespeare, they thought 'silence and night become the touches of sweet harmony.' I forget whether I have not already told you that in your language I have made some proficiency.'

Osmond, by a bow, signified he had, and the Count proceeded to descant upon the tranquillising effect which a scene such as they were then viewing was calculated to have upon the mind, 'an effect which convinces me,' he added, 'that for a wounded mind there is nothing like the quietness of solitude.'

'Excuse me, my dear Count,' said Osmond, unwilling to miss any opportunity that occurred for endeavouring to correct his new friend's erroneous way of thinking, 'for confessing I do not agree with you in thinking so. The situation that permits our fulfilling the incumbent duties of life with propriety, is one that is infinitely better adapted to heal and renovate the wounded mind ; since, in the first place, it imperceptibly abstracts it from the contemplation of its sorrows, and, in the next, affords it opportunities of obtaining its own plaudits, than which surely nothing can be more sweet, more cheering, or more consolatory. But were it even otherwise, still a man could not be excused for withdrawing from society, while conscious that his continuance in it could be beneficial to any individual, which he who possesses health, strength, understanding, and fortune, assuredly must be. Permit me to give you the sentiments of that elegant writer, Doctor Zimmerman, on the subject.

'Those who have passed their lives in the domestic privacies of retirement, who have been accustomed but to friendship and love, who have formed their notion of virtue from those bright images which the purity of re-

ligion, the perfection of moral sentiments, and the feelings of an affectionate heart, have planted in their minds, are too apt to yield to the abhorrence and disgust they must unavoidably feel on a first view of the artificial manners and unblushing vices of the world. Issuing from the calm retreats of innocence and simplicity, and fondly hoping to meet with more enlarged perfection in the world, their amiable, just, and benevolent dispositions are shocked at the sour severities, the sordid selfishness, the gross injustice, the base artifices, and the inhuman cruelties, which deform the fairest features of social life, and disgrace the best formed fabric of human happiness. Revolting, however, as this disappointment must certainly be, and grievously as such characters must be wounded on entering the world, it is a cowardly desertion of their duty to shrink from the task, and withdraw their services from their fellow-creatures.'... Besides, I am thoroughly convinced,' continued Osmond, 'that he who should, in the morning of life, retire into solitude, would soon become the victim of regret and repentance, since the buoyant heart of youth can never long be the seat of *ennui* or disgust, can seldom long feel satisfied without moving in an active sphere; it is only in the declining period of life, when those who cheered, assisted, and supported us in our progress through it, have one by one disappeared from its busy scenes, or disappointed the confidence we fondly reposed in their affections, that we can, if ever, feel a permanent wish for entire seclusion.'

'My dear friend,' cried the Count, with the animation with which he was wont to speak whenever he was pleased, 'in how different a light do you make me view things to what I did before! I candidly confess, for some time past, I have been thinking of quitting the world, and deliberating whether to throw myself into the monastery of La Trappe, a hermitage on the Appennines, or one on Montserrat; but now, in consequence of your arguments, I entirely abandon the idea, and decide upon maintaining my post in the busy world. Yet, my dear friend, I believe you would scarcely wonder at my having almost resolved to quit it, did you know all

I have gone through. If you have no objection, I will give you a sketch of my story ; indeed I am anxious to do so, in order, by accounting for the reveries into which I so frequently fall, to obtain your forgiveness for them.'

Osmond bowed, and said he should conceive himself honoured by his Lordship's confidence.

Accordingly the Count began as follows.

CHAP. XII.

'The Gods are just....
 But how can finite measure infinite ?
 Reason, alas ! it does not know itself ;
 But man, vain man, would, with this short-lin'd plummet,
 Fathom the vast abyss of heav'nly justice.
 Whatever is, is in its causes just :
 But purblind man
 Sees but a part o' th' chain, the nearest link ;
 His eyes not carrying to that equal beam
 That poises all above.'

DRYDEN ORBIT.

' I HAVE already told you that I am the heir of the Placentia family : at a very early period I succeeded to my paternal titles and estates ; my mother dying in giving me birth, and my father soon after falling in the field of battle. By his will, I was placed under the guardianship of my maternal uncle, the Marchese Morati, who having no children of his own, adopted me as his son, and treated me in every instance, as did also his amiable lady, as if I had been so in reality.

' My education was suitable to my rank, and happily did my days glide on, until I completed my nineteenth year ; from which period (continued the Count, casting his eyes towards heaven, and heaving a deep sigh) I may date the commencement of all my sorrows. Gracious God ! had it been thy will to have snatched me hence at that time, what misery should I have been spared ! But

to proceed....Among the many young men I became acquainted with, on repairing from the Castle of Acerenza, the residence of my uncle, to Naples, for the completion of my education, there was none I so much admired, or became so strongly attached to, as the Count de Molina, only son of the Duke of that name, a nobleman then high in the confidence of his Sovereign, and filling the principal employments in the state, but whose hereditary fortune, through various causes, was much impaired.

‘De Molina returned my regard, and shortly becoming almost inseparable, I was introduced to his family, and thus obtained an opportunity of beholding his sister, the heavenly Elizara, about thirteen, when first she met my ardent gaze. To see, and not to love her, was impossible; and ere I was well sensible of being her slave, I found, on being united to her, depended my future happiness; but that I should find no difficulty in accomplishing my wishes relative to her, I confidently assured myself, my rank and fortune entitling me to an alliance with the most illustrious.

‘Conceiving that my uncle, as my guardian, was the properest person to disclose those wishes, I hastened to Acerenza, and flinging myself at the feet of the good man, implored him to repair without delay to Naples, and be at once the revealer and advocate of my passion for the beautiful Elizara. He heard the acknowledgment of it with satisfaction, her connections being such as to render an alliance with her truly desirable. Accordingly, he had no hesitation in complying with my request. In full assurance of succeeding in his embassy, he set out for Naples, leaving me behind him, for the purpose of accompanying my aunt thither, as soon as we received a summons from him to follow.

‘I will not dwell on the delightful reveries in which I indulged after his departure, since, alas! they were full of anticipations of happiness I was destined never to experience; suffice it to say, that never was a wretch fated to disappointment, less prepared for it than I was; for oh! my friend, I was doomed to experience the most severe, the most excruciating one, doomed to hear that Elizara

was engaged....engaged too, as if to aggravate the anguish imparted by the circumstance, to an enemy of my house, the Marchese Salvilina,...more, that she loved him, that she had given him possession of that virgin heart for which I sighed! Gracious Heaven, what were my feelings on being informed of this by my uncle! I raved.... I wept.... I abandoned myself to despair, and during its first paroxysms, might have been tempted to have raised my hand against my life, but for the vigilance of those by whom I was surrounded; and if I had, seeing I was utterly lost to hope, should I have been much to blame, my dear friend?? addressing Osmond with peculiar earnestness.

‘My dear Count,’ returned Osmond, ‘your putting such a question to me, convinces me you never consulted your reason on the subject, since, had you done so, it must have convinced you that the Divine Being, who sent us into this world, only has a right to recal us from it; that trials are incidental to this life; that to shrink from those we meet with, is to betray a want of due confidence in the goodness of the Almighty, which merits not his forgiveness, and fastens a stigma on our characters nothing can remove, such as the soldier would incur, who, finding himself on a post of danger, meanly deserted it. ‘By suffering well,’ says the poet, ‘our fortune we subdue.’ But even, allowing we should not all be happy enough to experience some lucky revolution in our fate, surely we should derive consolation and firmness of mind from the conviction, that in proportion to our sufferings here will be our felicity hereafter, provided those sufferings be borne with patience and fortitude.’

‘Always right, always right,’ exclaimed the Count, with his usual versatility, immediately giving into the opinion of Osmond. ‘My dear friend, if long blessed with your society, I clearly perceive I shall become quite an altered man: already, through your arguments, and the example of moderation and calmness you set me, I find myself acquiring a greater command over my feelings than I ever before possessed; once able to subjugate them completely, and from the state of calmness I should of consequence find my mind in, I should be able

to reason and reflect as you have done, and, of course, see all in a right light.'

'If we early attempt the conquest of ourselves, we shall find the attempt neither a very painful, nor yet an unavailing one,' returned Osmond. 'Man against his fellow man may put forth all his strength in vain; but never shall he do so in a combat with his own passions, provided he delays not too long taking the field against them. But come, my dear Count, the beauty and serenity of the evening invite us to take a promenade on deck; when we return hither, we will, if you please, resume the game of chess we commenced this morning, for I perceive you are agitated, and cannot therefore think of allowing you to pursue your narrative this evening.'

'You are all kind consideration, my friend,' said the Count, as he followed him up the cabin stairs.

The next morning, as soon as breakfast was over, he thus continued his story :....

'My uncle took me to different parts of Italy, trusting change of scene would divert and finally expel the corroding grief that had taken possession of my heart, and which, with deep regret, he perceived materially affecting my health; he, besides, incessantly represented to me the derogatory light in which I should make myself appear, by continuing to pine for an object I could not possess, and who had never entertained a tender sentiment for me; the foolish and ridiculous part I acted, in wasting my days in vain regrets for a being, while so many fully equal, if not superior to her, would be delighted to receive my addresses: in short, nothing that tenderness and wisdom could suggest, as likely to cure me of my unhappy passion, was omitted by him; but to no purpose did he exert himself to eradicate it....which perceiving, and that I grew rather worse than better for being hurried about, he at length hearkened to my ardent solicitations to return to Acerenza, for the delightful solitudes of which, than which nothing perhaps can be conceived more enchanting, I absolutely longed.

'Their tranquillity had soon a salutary effect upon me; by degrees the agitation of my spirits subsided.

The anguish of my mind abated sufficiently to permit the renewal of my former studies, that in particular of the English language. In the poetry of your country I frequently found a softness, a tenderness, not rivalling, 'tis true, but certainly, in some instances, not inferior to that for which the Italian poetry is famed. The dramatic writers, in particular, I found to excel in both ; hence they became my favourite authors, insomuch that I was seldom without the works of one or other of them about me, especially when I quitted the Castle, for the purpose of wandering amongst the awful shades embowering it, and which at this period I much delighted in.

After a long and solitary ramble one evening, feeling myself somewhat fatigued, I seated myself upon a verdant bank, within the shelter of a richly variegated and extensive wood, then glowing with the refulgence of the setting sun. Charmed with the awful tranquillity of the scene, so soothing and so well according with the feelings then prevailing in my mind, I could not forbear, in the enthusiasm it excited, repeating aloud, from a volume of your poet Shakespeare, which I had just drawn from my pocket....

' This shadowing desert, unfrequented woods,
I better brook than flourishing peopled towns.
Here I can sit alone, unseen of any,
And to the nightingale's complaining notes
Tune my distresses, and record my woes.'

Scarcely had the sound of my own voice ceased to vibrate on my ear, ere another, softer and more sweet than any I had ever before heard, saluted it, chaunting a simple melody. It seemed to be near ; but in vain did my eyes wander around, in eager quest of the object from whom it came : at length, on its ceasing, I arose, and cautiously advancing towards the spot whence I fancied it had proceeded, espied, through the trees, a young lad sitting on a mossy bank, clad in a shepherd's habit, his face entirely concealed from view by a large hat.

On my approach, as if alarmed by the rustling noise occasioned by my making my way through the thickets that interposed between him and me, he started up, and fled with precipitation. The elegance of his figure,

which his flight displayed to the greatest advantage, struck me with admiration ; and I continued gazing after him till he was completely lost to my view in an immensity of shade. He did not, however, as quickly vanish from my mind as he had done from my sight. Never had I seen any thing equal to the grace and symmetry of his form ; and but perhaps owing to my imagination being a little heated at the moment by the studies I had for some time been pursuing, I could not divest myself of the idea of his present dress and occupation being such as he was not accustomed to ; in short, that misfortunes had compelled him to conceal beneath the humble garb of a shepherd, one who had, as the divine Poet, from which I have just quoted, says....

‘ Seen better days,
And had with holy bell been knoll’d to church ;
And sat at good mens feasts, and wip’d his eyes
Of drops that sacred pity had engender’d.’

This idea induced me to form the resolution of seeking him out, that if my conjecture was right, I might have the happiness of serving him. The following day I repaired to the wood, but in vain did I explore its beaten tracks. No shepherd was to be seen. I passed the ensuing one in the same manner, and to as little purpose. Neither were the enquiries I caused to be made after him throughout the neighbourhood more successful than my own researches, and at last I began to despair of ever beholding him again, or obtaining an opportunity of carrying into effect the many projects I had formed for his advantage. The relinquishment of these cost me no small pain, so thoroughly had I prepossessed myself with the idea of his being a person in misfortune, needing the services of a powerful friend ; had I been inclined to superstition, I should probably, from the suddenness of his disappearance, and the ill success of my enquiries after him, have been tempted to have taken him for a creature of the other world, dispatched to this on some gracious errand : as it was, I confess I gave way at times to very fanciful ideas respecting him.

‘ One morning, about a fortnight after I had seen him, as I was reading in my study, a servant entered it, al-

most breathless, to inform me he had just seen the young shepherd in an adjacent wood. I directly hastened thither, and on reaching the spot where I was told he had been seen, had the satisfaction of finding him there. On first catching a glimpse of him, his face, as in the first instance, was concealed from me, but as I drew near, he raised it, and discovered to my view....think, my dear friend, what my feelings must have been at the moment.... the features, the heavenly features of Elizara de Molina !....Bolts and bars could scarcely have impeded my progress at the moment....in an instant I had her clasped to the heart which had been so long tortured with despair on her account, Oh, my dear friend, imagine.....

‘ But have you ever been in love,’ cried the Count, with a sudden change in his voice, and giving Osmond an anxiously enquiring look, ‘ for if you have, you can of course so well picture them to yourself, that it will be quite unnecessary for me to attempt describing the raptures I experienced, at finding that had the divine maid been at liberty to obey the dictates of inclination, I never should have felt a pang on her account.’

Osmond laughed.....‘ As yet, I confess,’ said he, ‘ I am a stranger to those agonies the poet styles charming.’

‘ Well, well, your time is yet to come,’ cried the Count.....‘ But to proceed....My joy at discovering I was beloved by my Elizara was as extravagant as my grief had been when I imagined the reverse : scarcely could I credit the evidence of my senses, scarcely think myself awake, when I heard her melodious voice murmuring in my ear the acknowledgment of a reciprocal passion. The purport of her story to me was as follows :....

‘ The Duke, her father, who had for a long time been a widower, became enamoured, about the period I first saw her, of a blooming girl, under the guardianship of the Marchese Salvilina, but who refused him her hand, except, in return, he bestowed upon him that of his daughter. The Duke, whose principal study had ever been his own gratification, was not so regardless of it now as not readily to promise this, a promise which not all the solicitations of his daughter could induce him to

retract, though she repeatedly assured him death would be preferable to an union with Salvilina, even though her heart had not been engaged to another, his age, appearance, and character being all against him. He knew his own wishes could not be accomplished except the Marchese's were, and this consideration effectually hardened his heart against her. Convinced, at length, that he was completely deaf to the voice of nature, Elizara conceived herself fully justified in flying from his tyranny, and endeavouring to ensure her own happiness, by undeceiving me with regard to her sentiments.

Accordingly, a few days prior to the one fixed on for her nuptials with Salvilina, she unbosomed herself to her woman, who, fortunately for her, had been the favourite attendant of her deceased mother, and was by her not only provided with a disguise, that enabled her to escape unmolested from the Palace of Molina, but accompanied from it.

Previous to her elopement, she heard of my being at Acerenza, and thither therefore decided on immediately bending her steps, to which her faithful companion being related to a person in the neighbourhood, was an additional inducement. On her arriving, however, in it, a thousand fears, the offspring of delicacy, started in her mind, and finally determined her on leaving it to chance to acquaint me with our vicinity to each other. In the meanwhile, in order to be enabled with still greater security to resort to the solitudes, she understood, I frequented, she laid aside the disguise in which she had escaped from the palace of her father, and assumed that of a shepherd's boy.

Two tedious weeks passed away without her seeing me: at length she beheld me, but her joy at the moment was damped by hearing me speak, as from that circumstance she concluded I could not be alone, without being assured of which, both modesty and apprehension forbade her letting me see her. The day ensuing the one she saw me, several suspicious looking men were discovered lurking in the neighbourhood, whom, not doubting to be emissaries of her father's, or disappointed lover, she resolved, till informed of their

departure from it, not to venture out again : hence, to this resolution was owing the fruitlessness of my search after her.

‘ When the transports excited by this meeting and *eclaircissement* had sufficiently subsided to permit us to think and speak in a rational manner, my lovely mistress consented to take up her residence at the Castle of Acerenza, and render me the happiest of men, provided my uncle and aunt invited her to it, and still sanctioned my addresses to her.

‘ Impatient to see her beneath their roof, and have her receive from them the assurance so essential to my felicity, I was parting from her sooner than I could otherwise have brought myself to do, when, pity me, my friend....pity a man who on the very brink of happiness.... which he had been long languishing for, saw himself suddenly precipitated into misery. Salvilina, with several ruffians, stood before us. I was unarmed ; the efforts, therefore, which I made to prevent my Elizara from being torn from me were ineffectual : she was forced from my arms, and at the same moment the cowardly and detestable Salvilina, enraged by the open avowal of her passion for me, and dreading the fury of my resentment, stabbed me twice in the side, and left me to all appearance dead. My non-appearance in the banquetting-room at the usual hour occasioned a search for me : for many hours after I was brought home, I remained senseless, so completely was I exhausted by loss of blood, and the dreadful agitation I had undergone.

‘ As soon as I regained the faculty of speech, I accounted to my nearly distracted relatives for the situation in which they found me, but not so much for the purpose of awakening their resentment against the perfidious Salvilina, as for that of stimulating them to make immediate exertions for the recovery of Elizara : so thoroughly persuaded, however, were they, that the moment he had got her into his power, he had forced her to become his, that they made not an effort for the purpose ; which at length discovering, through means of my valet Antonio, I resolved, though still extremely weak and ill, on immediately quitting the castle, in order to attempt

her rescue myself ; or, if too late to prevent her becoming the wife of my foe, to take signal vengeance on him for having robbed me of her, and thus blasted the felicity of both our lives.

‘ Aware that to have mentioned this resolution would have been to cause its frustration, I merely confided it to Antonio, whose assistance was requisite to enable me to carry it into effect. At the midnight hour I stole from the castle, attended by him ; nor until the halting of the carriage the next morning, which he had procured to take me from it, once thought of the consternation and agony into which my flight from it at such a juncture would throw my affectionate relatives ; no sooner however, had the reflection occurred, than I sat down to implore their forgiveness for the step I had taken, and assure them that I should not be unmindful of the life on which I knew they set so high a value. I dispatched my letter by a special messenger, and then with all possible expedition pursued my journey to Naples.

‘ On my arrival, I hastened to the palace of Molina, and was at once surprised and agonized by hearing of the sudden death of the Duke, and that a rumour prevailed throughout the palace of my Elizara being privately married to the Marchese Salvilina ; but where they were, or her brother, the young Duke, the porter either could not or would not inform me. I will not fatigue you by detailing the various methods I had recourse to for endeavouring to discover the retreat of my abhorred rival, and whether indeed he had deprived me of all hope of possessing my Elizara. All proved unsuccessful, and at last I began to think my wisest way would be to try and throw him off his guard, by ceasing for a time all public enquiries, at least, and assuming an appearance of gaiety ; this I accordingly did, and for the better supporting the deception, began to frequent the different public places, though, Heaven knows, with a heart little disposed for amusement.

‘ I repaired one evening to a gambling-house, with a party of young noblemen, with whom I had dined. My joy was unspeakable, when on entering a billiard-room, the first object I beheld was the brother of my Elizara.

It was a short-lived joy, however, for on flying to him, and attempting to take his hand, he drew back, with a cold and repelling air ; and after surveying me for an instant, with a haughty and indignant look, turned away in contemptuous silence. Astonishment at this conduct rivetted me for a few seconds to the floor ; to let it pass, however, without enquiring into the cause of it, was not to be thought of ; as soon, therefore, as I recollected myself, I again approached him, and having obtained his notice by gently pressing his arm, for he kept his looks studiously averted from mine, I begged in a low tone, to know to what I was to attribute the extraordinary reception I had met with from him ? At this question he turned upon me a look full of fierceness, and bade me ask my own heart.

‘ It cannot enlighten me on the subject,’ I replied, ‘ since it has ever been faithful to the friendship I vowed for you.’

‘ ‘Tis false,’ he exclaimed with increasing fury ; ‘ had it been so, the honour of my house would never have been injured, by the seduction of my sister from her family.’

‘ I started ; in this accusation I clearly recognised the infernal machinations of Salvilina.

‘ By Heaven,’ I passionately returned, ‘ I have been unjustly accused : but this is no place for an explanation ; let us retire, and I trust I shall soon be able to convince you that I have been so,’

‘ Take this,’ he cried, in a voice of thunder, for so impudently avowing to me your belief of being able to impose upon me ;’ and as he spoke, he struck me across the face with the back of his hand.

‘ When I tell you that at this very moment my blood boils with indignation at the recollection of this injurious treatment, you may easily picture to yourself, my dear friend, my feelings at the instant of receiving it. I directly drew. I no longer thought of his being the brother of Elizara....I thought only of revenge. But even though my feelings had been less outraged than they were, still I could not have acted otherwise than I did, without having had my name branded with infamy,

seeing we were surrounded by a crowd of the most distinguished men in Naples.

‘ The Duke followed my example ; a kind of desperate fury nerved my arm, and at the first pass he fell lifeless at my feet. With his last sigh vanished my last lingering hope of happiness ; for that Elizara, be her situation what it might, would ever consent to a union with the destroyer of her brother, I could not flatter myself. Horrible reflections overwhelmed me, and rendered me unable to think of, much less make, an effort for my safety.

‘ The friends, however, who had accompanied me to the billiard-room, were not uninterested about it ; they hurried me away, and caused Antonio to set out with me directly for Rodez, in France, where I had some relatives residing. After being there a few days, I awoke, as from a lethargy, and recollecting, the very morning of the day on which the fatal rencontre took place, my having heard that Salvilina had been recently seen at Oviedo, in Spain, I determined on proceeding thither immediately, for the purpose of endeavouring to ascertain the fate of Elizara ; but no longer from any selfish motive, being thoroughly convinced, as I have already said, that nothing could induce her to become the wife of him, by whose hand her brother fell, even though she might be inclined to allow the provocation he had received sufficient to excuse the conduct it led to.

‘ Distracted as my mind was, however, I did not entirely forget the dear friends at Acerenza. Prior to my setting out for Spain, I dispatched a long explanatory letter to them.

‘ I commenced my journey over the Pyrennees with no other attendant than Antonio, conceiving my having more might prevent my travelling with the expedition I wished. We reached the borders of Spain in safety, and night approaching, were pushing forward with all our might for a hamlet, where we purposed sleeping, when we were suddenly attacked by a small party of brigands. We were both armed, and fired. The mule on which I rode, terrified by the report of the fire-arms, broke from the ruffian who had seized her bridle, and set off with a

speed that was truly alarming, considering the dangers of the road. From being dashed to pieces, I was in all probability only saved by the intervention of some soldiers advancing in the direction my unruly beast had taken. They soon succeeded in securing her, and being briefly informed of what had happened, accompanied me to the spot where I had left my poor Antonio, whom the banditti having first rifled, had left for dead upon the ground. My horror, while I imagined him so, was inexpressible, as, exclusive of the regard I felt for him on account of his long and faithful services, I considered myself the cause of his death, by having had the temerity to undertake so dangerous a journey, without the usual attendants. Thank Heaven I was rescued from the pangs which the idea of being so would have entailed upon me.

‘The soldiers conveyed him to the nearest village, where, owing to the prompt and skilful assistance he received, he speedily recovered.

‘As soon as he was again able to bear the fatigue of travelling, I recommenced my journey; but vain were all the enquiries I set afloat after Elizara and Salvilina on reaching Oviedo: I could learn no tidings of either; trusting, however, that by continuing some time in it, I might, at length, be fortunate enough to do so, I resolved on a longer stay there than I at first intended, a resolution which a letter from my aunt, the Marchesa Morati, acquainted me with the death of my uncle, and entreating me to return immediately to Acerenza, as from my presence she could only derive consolation for his loss, induced me to give up. Accordingly I hastened from Oviedo to Santillana, where I was informed I should be more likely, than in any other place on the coast, to procure a speedy passage for Italy; this, however, on arriving there, I found I could not do for a few days. I tried to while away the interval, and beguile my mind of the melancholy reflections that oppressed it, by rambling about the country.

‘The result of these rambles you are acquainted with; permit me, however, to observe, that had the accident they occasioned me to meet with been attended with infinitely more serious consequences than it was, I should

nevertheless have rejoiced at it, since the means of introducing me to your acquaintance....to you, to whose arguments I shall ever consider myself indebted, for not having acted in a manner derogatory to my character, as but for you, I should assuredly, after passing a little time with my aunt, have thrown myself into a religious solitude, owing to my despair about Elizara, a measure, I now clearly perceive, that could not have failed of drawing upon me the imputation of weakness. Yet, oh my dear friend, can you wonder that I should be sick of life? robbed as I have been of all that gave it value in my eyes, surely no one can deny that I am the most unfortunate of men? Yes as one of your elegant poets says...

'Time gives increase to my afflictions :
The circling hours, that gather all the woes,
Which are diffus'd thro' the revolving year,
Come heavy laden with the oppressing weight
To me....With me successively they leave
The sighs, the tears, the groans, and restless, cares,
And all the damps of grief that did retard their flight;
They shake their downy wings, and scatter all
Their dire collected dews on my poor head,
Then fly with joy and swiftness from me.'

'Tell me, my dear friend,' he continued, looking anxiously at Osmond, 'do you not think I have a right to exclaim against fortune? Do you not think I have met with more than common calamities, that I am one of the most singularly unfortunate of my species?'

'Since you press for my opinion, I trust my dear Count,' replied Osmond, 'you will excuse me for saying that I see nothing in what you have met with, that differs from the ordinary lot of man, since we are all liable to trials, to misfortunes of various kinds....all doomed, at some period or other, in a greater or less degree, to experience the uncertainty of worldly pursuits, doubtless to prevent our attachment to this transitory state being too great. Complaints may aggravate, but most certainly can never alleviate our afflictions....afflictions which are as often, if not oftener brought on by our own misconduct than by circumstances we could prevent: in either case.

however, they should be borne with patience, from the conviction that they could not have befallen us without the permission of the Most High, and the consideration that the attainment of our wishes might not by any means have been instrumental to the furtherance of our happiness. Yet think not, my dear Count, from what I have said, that I do not sincerely feel for your sufferings. They have been great, though not singular....such as entitle you to, and must ensure to you, the sympathy of every feeling heart: in time, I trust the painful impression they have made upon your mind, will lessen sufficiently to allow of your enjoying the happiness still within your reach. Your own exertions will do much towards overcoming it: and to these I think you must feel yourself stimulated, by the expectations you must be conscious your friends have formed with respect to you, from the understanding you possess, and the regard you have ever professed for them. Perseverance in a hopeless passion nothing can excuse.'

'Except,' eagerly interposed the Count, 'the impossibility of conquering it.'

'Pardon me,' rejoined Osmond, 'I can admit of no such impossibility. You are fond of quotations from the English poets; hear what one of them says on the subject:

'Rouse to the combat,

And thou art sure to conquer; wars shall restore thee....
The sound of arms shall wake thy martial ardour,
And cure this am'rous sickness of thy soul,
Begun by sloth, and nurs'd by too much ease,
The idle God of Love supinely dreams
Amidst inglorious shades of purling streams,
In rosy fetters and fantastic chains
He binds eluded maids and simple swains;
With soft enjoyments woos them to forget
The hardy toils and labours of the great:
But if the warlike trumpet's loud alarms
To virtuous acts excite, and manly arms,
The coward boy avows his abject fear,
On silken wings sublime he cuts the air,
Scar'd at the noble noise, and thunder of the war.'

'By Heaven,' exclaimed the Count, starting from his chair with wildness in his eyes, 'I would not if I could be cured of mine; and well it is for me that I do not

wish to be so, since I know it to be perfectly impossible that I ever should conquer a passion such as mine !

' I have no reason left that can assist me ;
And none would have. My love's a noble madness,
Which shews the cause deserves it. Moderate sorrow
Fits vulgar love, and suits a vulgar man ;
But I have lov'd with such transcendent passion,
I soar'd at first quite out of Reason's view,
And now am lost above it.'

Osmond could not forbear smiling both externally and internally at this rant: his smile, however, was quickly succeeded by regret, for the unsettled, and of consequence unhappy state of the Count's mind, but notwithstanding his little hastinesses and foibles, he could not avoid admiring, as well as loving him, so amiable were his manners, so liberal his sentiments, so benevolent his heart.

CHAP. XIII.

' When Fortune means to men most good,
She looks upon them with a threat'ning-eye.'

SHAKESPEARE.

HAVING entered the Streights of Messina, the Italian shores appeared in view, exhibiting a variety of the most beautiful scenery, set off and heightened by the brilliant clearness of the atmosphere. In the enthusiasm it awakened, Osmond could not refrain from exclaiming, in the language of the poet,

' Could Nature's bounty satisfy the breast,
The sons of Italy were surely blest ;
Whatever fruits in different climes were found,
That proudly rise, or humbly court the ground ;
Whatever blooms in torrid tracts appear,
Whose bright succession decks the varied year ;
Whatever sweets salute the northern sky,
With vernal lives that blossom but to die ;

These here disporting own the kindred soil,
 Nor ask luxuriance from the planter's toil;
 While sea-born gales their gelid wings expand,
 To winnow fragrance round the smiling land.'

But human pleasure is liable to continual interruptions. As the vessel was doubling Cape di Spartivento, a galley suddenly bore down upon it, and being unprepared for resistance, took it with little opposition.

The Count, who was all impatience to behold his dear aunt, and realize the plans he had formed for the amusement of Osmond, was nearly distracted at this unexpected event, and with his usual impetuosity would immediately have announced his rank to the pirates, and endeavoured to enter into a negotiation with them for the restoration of his liberty, but for Osmond's entreating him in a whisper not to be hasty in any thing he did on the present occasion, as he had not a doubt but that the knowledge of his rank would rather retard than accelerate his wishes.

'Well, my dear friend,' replied the poor Count, with a mournful look, and in a low voice, 'you shall guide me; but I trust you'll no longer deny that I am singularly unfortunate, that I am one of those unhappy beings over whom a kind of fatality seems to hang, counteracting and disappointing all their intentions.'

Osmond was on the point of answering, when a smart blow on the back with the flat side of a cutlass prevented him; and turning with quickness he perceived a fierce and savage-looking man behind him, who, from his dress and the authority he assumed, he concluded to be the captain of these sea robbers.... 'Come, come, my young spark,' cried he in Italian, on catching the eye of Osmond, 'you and your companion here must shift your quarters.' So saying he took him by the arm and led him into the galley, as did one of his companions the Count. The crew of the captured vessel being secured under the hatches, and a few men put on board to manage it, the pirate, to the surprise of the Count, shaped his course towards Acerenza.

While securing the other prisoners, Osmond and the Count were locked up by themselves in the principal ca-

bin, and had thus an opportunity afforded of conversing; of which the Count, in particular, eagerly availed himself... 'Oh, miserable man that I am!' he exclaimed, striking his breast with violence, the moment he found himself alone with Osmond; 'oh, miserable man! destined to be the incessant sport of fortune! Oh, wretched life, in which there is nothing certain but death! Though born to wealth and honours, yet here am I, doomed perhaps to pass the remainder of my days in slavery....a slavery the horrors of which will be aggravated by the idea of your being also dragged into it through my means.'

'For heaven's sake, my dear Count,' cried Osmond, who began to be seriously alarmed for his senses, so wild and disordered were his looks and gestures, 'endeavour to moderate these transports. I make no doubt this affair will end better than you imagine.'

'But should it not, should it not,' demanded the Count, in apparent agony, and clasping his hands, 'will you then be able to administer any consolation, to suggest any arguments calculated to assuage my misery?'

'I trust I shall,' said Osmond, endeavouring to rally his own spirits (for he was not without his share of agitation at the situation in which he found himself,) that he might be enabled to speak with calmness to the Count, such as had hitherto proved successful in subduing the violence of his emotions; 'I trust I shall....trust I shall be able to convince you, that in the midst of all their distresses, there remains to every sincere Christian that mixture of pure and genuine consolation which springs from the promises and hopes of the gospel; of what a singularly happy distinction this makes in their situation, beyond the state of those who are left without any thing to look to but a train of unknown causes and accidents, in which they see no light, no comfort; of the joyful hope we can entertain that the sufferings of the present time are but slight when compared with the happiness promised in the end to the virtuous; that evils besides, when borne with patience and dignity, improve and enoble our characters, bring into exercise several of the manly and heroic virtues, and by the constancy and fide-

ty they call into action on earth, prepare us for the highest rewards in heaven ; that moreover, from the present constitution of human nature, it is requisite for our well-being that they should be scattered in our path, since few of us can bear uninterrupted prosperity without being corrupted by it ; the poisonous weeds that grow up in that too luxuriant soil require the hand of adversity to extirpate them. It is the experience of sorrow and distress that subdues the arrogance of pride, tames the violence of passion, softens the hardness of the selfish heart, and humanizes the temper to feel for the woes of others.'

The Count here seized the hands of Osmond, and pressed them with fervor to his bosom.....' Oh my dear friend,' with tearful eyes, he cried, ' what would I give that I had the same command over my feelings that you have ; that I had my mind stored with the same self-evident and divine truths that yours is ; since I am satisfied, if that were the case, I should be a very different creature to what I now am, capable of supporting the hour of trial with fortitude, and administering consolation to myself and others ; but from this instant I am resolved to set about the conquest of myself....resolved to prove to you, that I have profited by your arguments and example. Yes, I'll no more be like a vane blown about by every gale. To convince you I am sincere, I wish to heaven some new trial was this moment to befall me. For from henceforth,' he added, starting up with an altered voice and countenance,

' No terror to my view,
No frightful face of danger can be new ;
Inur'd to suffer, and resolv'd to bear,
The fates without my power shall be without my care.'

Osmond did not altogether join him in the above wish, aware that to declaim against our errors was a much easier thing than to conquer them when of long standing.

Their conversation was at length interrupted by the entrance of the Captain and another man. The evening was by this time far advanced ; and in a gruff voice the former demanded of his prisoners whether they would

not turn in? To which the Count replied in the negative, adding, disturbed minds could feel but little inclined to repose.

'Well,' rejoined the Captain, but in the same surly tone, 'you may follow your inclinations; we know how to treat prisoners well, who have the appearance of being able to pay for good treatment.'

'Depend on it,' said the Count eagerly, and starting from the seat on which he had just thrown himself, 'there's none we experience from you shall go unrewarded. Say what you demand for our release,' continued he, forgetful of all Osmond had said to him against precipitancy on the subject, 'and.....'

'Patience, patience,' interrupted the Captain, with a grin of exultation, 'I have too much business on my hands to engage in any other at present. The day after to-morrow, and you and I will talk over what you have mentioned.'

This speech, tending to convince Osmond there was but little danger of their being detained in captivity, calmed in a great degree the agitation of his mind. It failed, however, of producing a similar effect on the Count, owing to his anger at the delay of the negotiation he wished to enter into; and thus, by the feelings he betrayed on the occasion, convinced Osmond that notwithstanding his recent assertions, he had not yet entered upon the task of reformation.

The Captain's companion having taken some provisions from a locker, they seated themselves at a table; and regardless of the presence of their prisoners, who sat at some distance from them, renewed a conversation in which they were engaged on entering the cabin.... 'I tell you again,' cried the Captain, 'you did wrong, very wrong, Varcelli, in persuading me to make the recent capture; for I am convinced, in consequence of the division of our crew it has occasioned, we shall not be able to carry the Marchese's plan into execution.'

'Bless your heart,' replied the other, 'who have we to contend with but women? I bet you any wager, that with four men I achieve the business in hand.'

'Hold, hold, not so fast, my friend,' returned the

Captain ; ' I see you know but little of the establishment of the castle of Acerenza by what you have said. Why to my knowledge there are never less than forty men-servants within it, all stout, strong, active fellows, and who would soon succeed in sending you and your four men to the devil, Mr. Varcelli. If I had not been obliged to divide my brave lads, by yielding to your avaricious wishes, I should not have doubted succeeding in the enterprize we have undertaken ; but now weakened as our force is, I have serious apprehensions of failing in it. A pretty thing it will be if we are compelled to give it up, and thus not only lose the reward promised us by the Marchese, but the chance we should have had, by persevering in it, of enriching ourselves with the treasures of Acerenza. Come, as you have been the means of bringing me into a hobble, set your d....mnd plotting brains to work to get me out of it.'

While this discourse was passing, Osmond watched the Count with fear and trembling, terrified lest from the emotion he saw it had thrown him into, he should discover himself....a circumstance which he doubted not would occasion, if not their immediate destruction, at least their lasting captivity ; as, from what he had heard of the Marchese Salvilina, he was convinced he was the person who had instigated the ruffians to the attack of Acerenza, for the purpose of either murdering or carrying off the Count, of whose not being there at present he understood he was ignorant.

The cabin being small and the looks of the Captain and his comrade every now and then directed towards him and his friend, he could do nothing more than endeavour to catch the eyes of the Count, in order to give him a significant look, expressive of the necessity there was for silence, but in vain he tried to do this ; the looks of the Count were rivetted upon the ruffians ; and at length to the utter dismay of Osmond, he passionately exclaimed, clasping his hands together, and looking up....' Gracious heaven ! surely you will not permit such wickedness to triumph. You will not permit innocence and virtue to be injured with impunity.'

' Hey ho ! what's that you said, my spark ?' cried the

Captain, dropping his knife and fork, with which he had for some time been very busily employed, and turning, as did his companion Varcelli, a fiercely-enquiring look, first upon the Count and then on Osmond.

The Count instantly arose ; Osmond also started from his seat ; and perceiving, if he did not prevent his speaking, all he wished concealed would be betrayed, pushed him aside and stepping before him, exclaimed, but not without giving him an expressive glance.... 'I'll tell you.... I'll explain to you the cause of his exclamation.'

'Be quick, then,' cried the Captain ; 'let me know without hesitation whether either of you know aught of the castle of Acerenza, or the family it belongs to ?'

'Yes, yes, you shall be obeyed,' returned Osmond, slowly approaching the table, endeavouring to think of something plausible to say.

'Well, why don't you begin,' cried the Captain.

'Ere I do,' rejoined Osmond, hesitatingly, and in order to gain a little more time for consideration, 'will you favour me with a glass of brandy and water ?'

'Varcelli, hand him the glass,' said the Captain gruffly.

Varcelli obeyed. Osmond kept the glass for a few minutes to his lips ; and during this interval, recollected himself sufficiently to fabricate the following story for his insolent interrogator :....

'I perceive, from the exclamation of my friend, you have been led to imagine we know something of the Morati family. - In the supposition that we do, you are not mistaken.'

'The devil I'm not !' vociferated the Captain, pushing back his chair from the table, in order to have a better opportunity of viewing Osmond.

'No,' returned Osmond, with coolness, 'you are not ; though greatly so, if you imagine we are interested about any of the members of it.'

'For several years a law-suit of considerable consequence has been carrying on between the houses of Morati and Tarento. To bring it to a conclusion, the evidence of two persons of the name of Alhama, father and uncle to my friend here (glancing at the Count,) was a

few months ago found to be necessary. Accordingly an inquiry was set on foot after them; and at length, though not without great difficulty, their residence being in a remote part of Spain, they were discovered and induced to come to Italy. Previous to their arrival, it was ascertained that their evidence was likely to occasion the suit to be decided in favour of the Tarento family.... This circumstance instigated the haughty and sanguinary one of Morati to form the horrible project of assassinating them....a project they but too well succeeded in carrying into effect. My friend on learning the dreadful fate of his two nearest and dearest relatives, and that their murderers, owing to their rank and consequence in the country, had met with no punishment for their crime, took a solemn vow never to rest till with his own hand he had inflicted an exemplary one on them. In short, to be candid....for since I have told so much I may as well tell you all....nothing short of the life of the Marchesa Morati, and her nephews, the young Count Placentia, who was also concerned in the murder, will appease his vengeance. We were bound for her castle, the walls of which we intended scaling at night, when you captured us.'

'And pray who may you be?' demanded the Captain, surveying him with a scrutinizing look; 'did the Morati family murder any of your kindred?'

'No,' replied Osmond, with quickness, 'but in injuring my friend, they injured me. You inquire who I am. I have been known some time to Don Alhama; and on his imparting his injuries to me, pledged my word to assist him in taking revenge for them.'

'Well, well, 'tis a maxim with me never to interfere in what does not concern myself,' cried the Captain, again drawing in his chair to the table, and filling himself out a bumper of brandy. 'In a little time, upon certain conditions which I shall then explain to you, I shall make no objection to setting you and your friend free, to blow the castle of Acerenza to the devil if you chuse it.'

Osmond bowed in token of gratitude, and then retreated from the table. In a few minutes after, the Cap-

tain and his companion quitted the cabin. The moment the astonished Count heard them overhead.... 'For heaven's sake, my dear friend,' he cried, in a low voice, and turning his eyes full upon Osmond, 'what was your motive for fabricating such a story as you have just told?'

'This is not time for explaining,' returned Osmond; 'I can only assure you a very sufficient one, and entreat you to keep yourself composed, let you hear what you may; above all, to be silent with respect to yourself. Thank Heaven, it occurred to us to give Antonio a caution on the subject, ere he was removed from us.'

'I will endeavour to act as you wish, my friend,' replied the Count; 'perhaps Heaven may enable us to frustrate the intentions of these ruffians with regard to Acerenza.'

'I trust it may,' cried Osmond; and in saying so, he said not only what he sincerely hoped, but was beginning to think might be the case; since, from the implicit credit the Captain appeared to give to his story, and his acknowledged want of hands for the business in agitation, he thought it probable as well as possible that he and his friend might be allowed to join the crew in their meditated attack upon the castle, and thus an opportunity afforded of alarming its inhabitants in time to put them on their guard.

The Captain shortly after returned to the cabin, still accompanied by Varcelli, who appeared to be his right-hand man; and soon after in consequence of a hint he dropt, the Count and Osmond retired to their respective births.

Neither were inclined to repose; and even if they had, they would still have resisted the inclination, from the anxiety they felt to overhear the Captain and his associate. Nothing new, however, transpired from either.

They had the honour of breakfasting the next morning with them; soon after which they were left for several hours to themselves, during which they suffered no small inquietude, hints having dropt from the Captain while at breakfast of its being his intention to make an attack upon the castle of Acerenza in the course of the approaching night. At length Varcelli made his appear-

ance, and told Osmond the Captain wanted to speak to him upon deck.

Thither Osmond immediately followed, with a heart palpitating with the hopes this summons gave rise to.... 'Well, my friend,' cried the Captain, taking him by the arm the moment he appeared, and drawing him aside, 'does the spark below continue in the same mind he was in yesterday?'....Osmond bowed....'And are you as inclined as ever to aid him in his designs on the Morati family?'....Osmond again bent his head....'Come, come, man,' proceeded the Captain, in a surly tone, and with a look which perfectly accorded with it, 'speak out at once, and don't be giving me any of your d....mnd dumb-show.'

'Our sentiments, then, with regard to the Morati family have not experienced the least change,' said Osmond.

'Then, since that is the case,' cried the Captain joyfully, 'we may all accomplish our respective wishes comfortably and pleasantly together. You must know that my crew is so weakened, owing to my having sent part on board the vessel you were in, that without two or three additional hands, I do not think it would be safe to venture to Acerenza. Now, rather than be at the trouble of sending to shore in quest of a few bravoës, I will let you and your friend accompany me thither to-night, and thus afford you a speedy opportunity of taking the revenge you thirst for, provided you give me up whatever valuables you have about you, as it is not my intention to ask you to return to the ship with me; and which, considering how ready I am to oblige you, and the handsome usage you have received from me, I think you cannot possibly object to.'

'Assuredly not,' returned Osmond, eagerly and delightedly. 'Permit me to inform my friend of your kindness; for since the dreadful fate of his relations, he has been in a state of mind that renders caution necessary in communicating any thing to him calculated to affect his feelings.'

'Very well, you shall; but remember,' continued the Captain, in a jocose tone, and with a sly look, 'no tricks

upon travellers. I saw a handsome watch-chain in his fob, and several handsome rings on his fingers.'

Osmond laid his hand upon his breast.... 'Trust my honour,' said he; 'if all the things you saw are not forthcoming, I shall not ask you to fulfil your present generous intentions respecting us.'

'That's an honest lad,' returned the Captain, 'clapping him on the back; 'but remember you tell your friend there must be no jabbering till we have done our work in the castle. About twelve I intend landing; by which time, as there is no moon at present, the night will be as dark as we could wish. By the help of scaling-ladders, we shall easily surmount the walls that encompass the castle. Our difficulties and dangers commence when we get within those; as in the centre of the outer court is a double row of low buildings, occupied by the male domestics.'

'But what then?' asked Osmond, anxiously. 'You reckon upon their all being asleep, or at any rate in bed, I conclude before you make your entry.'

'Why, yes. But as I was going to observe.... whether up or abed, never being off their guard, too much caution cannot be used in passing their lodgings to the upper court, which once having got possession of, we may, by having the whole of the castle and all the rest of its inhabitants then completely in our power, bid them defiance.'

'Never off their guard, do you say?' cried Osmond, with difficultly suppressed eagerness.

'No, they have always arms and lights beside them, in case of a surprise like the one I meditate, and which, from the situation of the castle on a lonely part of the coast, its owners have always been apprehensive of. So recollect, my friend, to keep in mind the necessity of circumspection; for once alarmed, and we have but little chance of succeeding in our enterprize.'

'Rely upon my making a proper use of what you have told me,' said Osmond, with sparkling eyes and a flushing cheek; 'and now, with your permission, I'll return to my friend below.'

He accordingly descended to the cabin, and found the poor Count the very picture of despair. He motioned him to the window, and in a low accent, and as briefly as possible, revealed to him the motive of his fabricated story to the Captain, and the result of it.

Extravagant as were the transports the Count had given way to on former occasions, they were trifling compared with those he now betrayed. He laughed and wept at the same instant, returned thanks to Heaven, and rapturously embracing Osmond, called him not only his preserver, but the preserver of his family. Then putting all his valuables into his hands.... 'Here, here, my dear friend,' he cried, 'let the rascal have all these immediately; and if not sufficient to satisfy his rapacity, let him send me a bond for any sum, and I will sign it.'

Osmond, again terrified for his senses, endeavoured to calm the transports which in his opinion endangered them, by reminding him of the fatal consequences that might result from the least imprudence, and the recent assurance he had given him of endeavouring to gain a command over himself.... 'In order to prove to me that you were sincere in giving it,' continued he, ' 'tis requisite you should bear the present change in your prospects with moderation.'

'My dear friend,' cried the Count, gently pressing his arm, 'rest assured that you shall never again see me so disturbed. But now, not to be all extasy, all transport, that I find we are on the point of regaining the liberty I feared was for ever lost to us, would, in my opinion, be to argue me possessed of a dull inanimate soul.'

A reply from Osmond was prevented by the entrance of the Captain.

'Heyday, my young sparks,' cried he, as he rushed in, 'have you got to loggerheads, that you speak so loud? at least you, Don, I forget your name,' glancing at the Count.

Osmond immediately deposited in his hands the valuables of the Count, accompanied by his own; and while with a greedy eye he was examining these, cast a look of mingled sorrow and anger at the Count, which he return-

ed with a deprecating one, expressive of his determination to conform himself without delay to the wishes of Osmond.

CHAP. XIV.

' And therefore wert thou bred to virtuous knowledge,
And wisdom early planted in thy soul,
That thou might'st know to rule thy fiery passions,
To bind their rage, and stay their headlong course;
To bear with accidents, and ev'ry chance
Of various life; to struggle with adversity;
To wait the leisure of the righteous gods;
Till they, in their own good appointed hour,
Shall bid thy better days some forth at once,
A long and shining train; till thou, well pleas'd,
Shall bow, and bless thy fate, and own the gods are just.'
Rowe's ULYSSES.

THE Captain's manner soon convincing them the sound of their voices was all he had heard, the alarm his words excited quickly subsided, and nothing further of any moment to them took place on board. Long before the midnight hour, the vessel was anchored within sight of the castle; and exactly at twelve, the party destined to attack it was landed beneath its walls, armed with pistols, cutlasses, and boarding-pikes. The walls, by means of scaling-ladders, were surmounted with ease. Osmond took care to be amongst the first who attempted them. The night was of a pitchy darkness....dark as the deed the pirate hoped to perpetrate beneath its mantle; but a glimmering light at a distance pointed out to Osmond the buildings occupied by the servants.

With cautious steps he drew away from the ruffians, and advancing up to the court drew a pistol from his belt, and fired it. The consequence was such as he looked for. The domestics, alarmed, quickly sallied forth; some with arms, and others with torches. The moment they appeared....'The walls have been scaled by banditti,

my friends,' exclaimed Osmond; 'be prompt in your measures, and they cannot escape.'

'This way, this way,' (to the utter astonishment of the domestics, who had no idea of his being then more than on his way to the castle) vociferated the Count, who unperceived had followed the steps of Osmond; but notwithstanding their astonishment, no time was lost in making inquiries; and after a slight scuffle the pirate and his crew was seized.

A servant then hastened to the inner court, to account to the Marchesa for the recent disturbance, and prepare her for the approaching interview with her nephew. By the time, therefore, he and his friend reached the castle, she, with several of her attendants, was ready to receive him.

Their meeting was truly affecting: for several minutes neither had power to express the mutual pleasure it gave rise to. When at length tears had a little relieved the fulness of their hearts, the Count, gently disengaging himself from the enfolding arms of the Marchesa, turned to Osmond, and taking him by the hand.... 'Behold, my dearest aunt,' he cried, as he led him towards her, 'the person to whom, under Heaven, you are indebted for your present safety....to whom I am indebted for the power of congratulating you on it. But for his interposition, I should ere this, I make no doubt, have been no more. After saying this it were superfluous to add, the obligations I owe him are unreturnable. Receive him my dearest aunt....receive the Chevalier Munro as a second son. Trust me the welcome and esteem which you may now grant him on my account, you will shortly accord him on his own.'

The Marchesa extended her hand, and taking Osmond's, pressed it to her lips and to her heart.

'Welcome, thrice welcome,' she said, 'to Acerenza. Oh how unnecessary for the Count to desire me to receive as a son him to whom he informs me I am indebted for the preservation of his life!'

'The Count rates quite too highly, Madam, the services I had the happiness of rendering him,' returned Osmond, as with the warm glow of gratitude and sensibili-

ty diffusing itself over his cheek, he bowed respectfully on her hand. 'He does more....he forgets that for any I conferred, I have received more than an adequate return. Yes, my dear Madam, believe me I am more a debtor than a creditor of the Count.'

'Generous souls ever endeavour to make light of the obligations they confer,' said the Marchesa: but come,' added she, 'we'll change the subject for the present, for I am certain you both need refreshment: and besides I am all impatience to learn the particulars of the recent affair, to what circumstance your arriving at such a moment, and in such company, is owing.'

As she spoke, she led the way to a table which the delighted and affectionate domestics had already spread with the refreshments; and seating herself at it, the Count on one hand and Osmond on the other, was soon gratified by the recital she wished to hear; when agitation impeded the utterance of the Count, Osmond taking up the story; and when modesty caused Osmond to pause, the Count impetuously pursuing it.

'Good Heaven!' exclaimed the Marchesa, on their concluding; 'how wonderful are thy ways, in all how manifest thy wisdom and goodness! How forcibly does what I have just heard convince me that we should never be impatient under afflictions! Had you not been taken by the pirate,' addressing herself particularly to the Count, 'a meeting like the present would never in all probability have taken place; and yet I dare say at the moment you were not a little disconcerted at the circumstance.'

The Count blushed, and Osmond involuntarily smiled at these words, which the Marchesa perceiving, also smiled herself, but in a manner which gave Osmond to understand she was thoroughly acquainted with the temper of her nephew.

After two hours passed at table, she insisted on the friends retiring to repose. Accordingly, Osmond was conducted to a magnificent chamber, where fatigue, united to the happy consciousness of security, quickly closed his eyes.

On awaking in the morning, he touched a bell, as he had been desired to do, when he chose to rise. A servant

immediately obeyed his summons ; and having accommodated him with a *robe de chambre*, desired to know whether he would like the refreshment of a bath. Osmond replying in the affirmative, was conducted to one lined with beautiful white marble, at the end of a gallery adjoining his chamber, and whence he was ushered to an elegant dressing-room, where he found habiliments of various kinds prepared for him....a very pleasing attention, as by this time his own were not such as he could have liked to appear in. On being drest, he was shewn to a saloon, where the Marchesa awaited him to breakfast. She received him with a smile of true benevolence, and led him herself to the breakfast-table, which fronted a range of lofty lattices, descending to the ground, and commanding a view of the most beautiful scenery.

‘ You must be content, Chevalier,’ said she, as they took their seats, ‘ to breakfast alone with me ; for the Count finds himself too much affected by the recollections this place has revived, to be able to join us for the present.’

Osmond made a suitable reply to this speech ; and the Marchesa, previously, however, dismissing the attendants, proceeded to say....‘ To tell you the truth, Chevalier, I am rather pleased than otherwise at his absence, being extremely anxious for the opportunity it has afforded me of having a little private conversation with you. Though still early,’ she continued, smiling perhaps internally at the surprise which from the looks of Osmond it was evident this declaration occasioned him, ‘ we nevertheless have had a long conversation this morning, by which means I have ascertained your possessing an ascendancy over him, that convinces me you are the properest person that can be chosen for disclosing the joyful tidings in store for him.’

Osmond started and clasped his hands. ‘ Joyful tidings !’ he repeated, in a tone and with a look that, had a doubt been entertained of the sincerity of his regard for the Count, would at once have dissipated it.

‘ Oh how delightful is it,’ resumed the Marchesa, perfectly appreciating his feelings on this occasion, and smiling with a tearful eye and ineffable sweetness on

him, 'when friendships take root in our early years, ingrafted on the ingenuous sensibility of youth; since friendships then contracted possess and retain to the last a tenderness and warmth seldom known in those that are formed in the riper periods of life, of which the emotions excited by the remembrance of our ancient and youthful connections is a convincing proof! for what heart is there of the smallest feeling that does not melt away at the recollection of those; and no wonder the dissolution of them being perhaps the most painful trial to which we are exposed here below.'

A deep sigh issued from her bosom as she uttered these last words....a sigh which evinced this observation the result of experience, not conjecture. After a short pause, she thus went on....'Yes, joyful tidings, I repeat, await my dear nephew, which you will readily allow, I believe, when informed that his juvenile friend, the Duke de Molina lives, and that his fair mistress, Lady Elizara, is still unmarried....the one as much his friend, and the other as inclined as ever to unite her destiny with his; of which, but for the precipitancy with which he was hurried from the kingdom, he would have heard ere this; as the very day after his rencontre with the Duke, Lady Elizara arrived in Naples, having contrived, by means of a domestic whom she bribed to assist her, to effect her escape from the mansion whither Salvilina conveyed her from Acerenza, for the purpose of compelling her to become his bride; and as soon as her brother was in a state of convalescence, so fully justified the Count in his opinion, and convinced him, that only a mind black as Salvilina's could have cast an imputation on him, that all his friendship for and wish for an alliance with him revived; to prove which, as soon as he was able to travel, he set out for this castle, with his sister, trusting he should find the Count concealed within it. His disappointment at not meeting him was considerably aggravated by our not then knowing where the dear wanderer was. He determined on going himself in quest of him; but honoured me by entrusting Lady Elizara to my care. In the letter I wrote to the Count, to acquaint him with the death of my dear Lord, and en-

treat his speedy return, I feared disclosing to him the happy termination of his troubles, lest the transports I well knew such a disclosure would excite should be too much, without a friend at hand to moderate them ; for a frame and mind like his, enervated by sickness and long-suffering, I still see that too much caution cannot be used in acquainting him with the change in his prospects ; and am therefore induced to entreat you to undertake the task, the weakened state of my own spirits at present, owing to various afflicting events, convincing me that I am totally inadequate to it myself.'

Osmond bowed. ' With delight, with pleasure, Madam,' he said. ' Oh what transport, to have the power of administering consolation to the afflicted mind ; and still more to have the power of removing the grief that rendered that consolation necessary ! How amply will my friend be now rewarded for his past sufferings ; and how truly does he whose generous heart prompts him to take so lively an interest in the fate of others, merit the recompence they'll receive.'

' His nature is indeed truly noble,' rejoined the Marchesa ; ' and could he but acquire a little steadiness, he would be every thing his friends could wish ; as much their happiness as he is now their pride : but as long as he permits his feelings to triumph over his reason, he must continue a source of uneasiness to them.'

' Hope every thing from the restoration of his happiness, my dear Madam,' said Osmond. ' A mind despairing of the accomplishment of its wishes, could scarcely be otherwise than unsettled.'

' I hope much, but not every thing, from it,' replied the Marchesa, with vivacity, ' since I hope a great deal from you. Yes, my dear Chevalier, from the high opinion my nephew entertains of you, and the influence you possess over him, I am persuaded you can do more towards rendering him the perfect creature nature designed him to be, than either time or the change in his affairs. I rely,' she continued, ' on your preventing any farther hostilities between him and the Marchese Salvina, which I much fear he will feel an inclination to renew. When he discovers that the meditated attack up-

on the castle was intended for the purpose of rifling it of its richest treasure, its brightest ornament, Lady Elizara....'

'Heavens, is it possible?' exclaimed Osmond.

'The pirate, doubtless from a hope of being able by such a measure to avert, if not entirely, at least in some degree, from himself the punishment he has incurred, confessed all to my people.

'The Marchese, convinced that by stratagem he should never be able to wrest Lady Elizara from me, determined on having recourse to violence for the purpose. I am sorry to say this is a country in which a man can never be at a loss for ready instruments to execute any villainy he may plan. Speedily, therefore, he met with such desperadoes as he wanted; meaning, as soon as Lady Elizara was again in his power, to quit the kingdom for some time with her.'

'Has your Ladyship yet come to any determination respecting the wretches that have been so fortunately thrown into your power?'

'You may be sure I think them deserving of exemplary punishment; but am so sensible it cannot be inflicted on them without publicity being given to an affair on many accounts it were better to have buried in oblivion, that I believe I shall let them escape it. To the obligations you have already conferred on me, Chevalier, you would add by condescending to take the subject into consideration, and becoming the arbiter of their fate yourself.'

'With pleasure, Madam,' replied Osmond; 'my having heard your Ladyship's sentiments will be a guide to me how to act.'

'The ship they captured is already released,' said the Marchesa, 'and of course my nephew's attendant Antonio.'

Osmond expressed great pleasure at this circumstance; fears of creating suspicion in the mind of the pirate, and thus of causing the overthrow of the plans he had been at such pains to arrange, having prevented his interfering about him.

After a little further conversation respecting the atro-

cities of Salvilina, Osmond inquired whether Lady Elizabeth was then in the castle?

'She is,' replied the Marchesa; 'never having left it since her brother committed her to my protection, nor never will, I trust, till she has resigned her present name.'

'Her Ladyship knows, I presume, of the Count's return?'

'Yes; but is too well aware of the necessity there is for preparing him for an interview with her, to appear before him unexpectedly: and now, Chevalier, with your permission,' added the Marchesa, breakfast by this time being over, 'I will return to him, and endeavour to argue him into a proper state of mind for joining you, and hearing the delightful intelligence you have to communicate. In the mean while, if disinclined to take a ramble about the grounds, you'll find in an adjoining apartment, books, musical instruments, and implements for writing, to amuse yourself with.'

'In such a mansion as this,' respectfully bowing, 'I am convinced 'tis impossible any one can be at a loss for amusement;' rising as he spoke to open the door for her Ladyship.



CHAP. XV.

'Who can behold such beauty and be silent?
Desire first taught us words: Man, when created,
At first, alone, long wander'd up and down,
Forlorn and silent as his vassal beast;
But when a heav'n-born maid, like you, appear'd,
Strange passion fill'd his eyes, and fir'd his heart,
Unloos'd his tongue; and his first talk was love.'

OTWAY.

ON the Marchesa's withdrawing, Osmond quitted the saloon, impatient to take a nearer survey of the beautiful scenery it commandéd.

Immediately before it stretched a gently-swelling and extensive lawn, covered with a short, soft, thick grass of

ed close to the shore, and not far from a beautifully ornamented vessel at anchor; and, with the assistance of a boat-hook, had but little difficulty in steering himself to the island. On landing, he found himself amidst the most luxuriant and beautiful foliage, forming a succession of natural arbours to the centre of the island. On gaining this, his further progress was impeded by some craggy heights, bespread with wild thickets, and lost at each side in an apparent impenetrable mass of shade. On narrowly examining, he suddenly espied an arched chasm in one of the cliffs: he immediately approached it; and passing through, found himself, to his unutterable surprise, in a spacious cavern or grotto, of the most romantic appearance.

Its roof was lofty, and composed entirely of rocks and minera, which here and there descending to the ground, formed magnificent though irregular arches embossed with creeping vegetables, and tinted with the most beautiful colours. The apparently incessant moisture that trickled down the sides, had, in different parts, collected into rills, which fell from rock to rock with a murmuring noise, soothing and delightful to the ear, and which, as they broke the rays of light that crevices in the roof admitted, formed the most romantic vibrations and appearances, sufficiently almost to have warmed the imagination into a belief of being in the splendid palace of a fairy.

Osmond, wondering and admiring at every step, proceeded through a labyrinth of rocks to another opening beyond which he beheld a spiral staircase. Impatient to see all the wonders of the place, he eagerly ascended this, and found himself, on gaining the last step, before the entrance of a noble apartment, crowned with a lofty dome, embellished with the finest paintings, and supported by a double row of white marble pillars; the intervals between them alternately filled up with statues of the most exquisite workmanship, and couches covered with rose-coloured silk, surmounted with pedestals of bronze, and antique vases filled with the richest and most odoriferous flowers.

After taking a survey of this apartment, and its costly

embellishments, Osmond advanced to view the scenery it commanded, and descending some steps shaded by a projecting pediment, resting, like the roof, on beautiful pillars, found himself on the brink of a steep rock, down which a noble sheet of water precipitated itself into a deep bed beneath, through which flowed a broad and transparent stream to the lake. At the foot of the fall, alternately lost and reappearing amidst the white foam it occasioned, was a beautiful figure of Venus, represented in the act of wringing her wet tresses over her shoulder, as if about quitting the lucid element; and a little further on, but still so situated as, like the goddess on whose motions they appeared attending, to be continually lost to the view, was a group of three lovely nymphs, leaning on each other.

The scenery on either side was perfectly appropriate : high fences of wicker-work extended along the edge of the stream, interwoven with creeping shrubs ; and beyond them were dispersed bowers of roses and myrtle, backed by shady groves, resounding with the melody of innumerable birds. Such an enchanting spot altogether Osmond had never seen ; nor did he think it possible one could be found more calculated for the indulgence of that luxurious langour the climate of Italy gives rise to, the wanderings of the imagination, the reveries of fancy, the waking day-dreams, so delicious to taste and sensibility, than it was.

From the contemplation of its beauties, he was suddenly diverted by a soft strain of music. He started, looked round him, listened attentively, and, on a repetition of the sound, conceiving it proceeded from the room, returned thither immediately, casting his eyes eagerly around in quest of the invisible musician, but without perceiving any other object than those which had previously met his view. Still, however, persuaded he was not mistaken, he examined the apartment more narrowly than he had before done, and at length discovered, behind one of the statues, a small door partly open, leading to another room of smaller dimensions, but still more tastefully furnished than the outer one ; and at the furthest end of which, by an open lattice, and in such a

direction as, without allowing her to see him, afforded him a perfect opportunity of seeing her, sat a young lady with a lute.

Scarcely had the eyes of Osmond fallen on her, than every sense became absorbed in admiration, so beautiful an object never before having met his enraptured gaze : yet it was not so much the gracefulness of her form, or the dazzling fairness of her skin, though so delicate, so clear, that the meandering of her blue veins was seen as through a transparent veil; neither the soft glow of her complexion, though

‘ The softest bloom that Nature spreads
Gave colour to her cheek :

nor yet the dimple of that cheek, though such as painters give to Hebe ; or the radiance of her fine blue eyes, sparkling through their long silken lashes, that charmed him so much as the ineffable sweetness and animated expression of her countenance....a countenance to which the pale auburn hair that hung in wild profusion over her brow, and cast a softening shade upon her lovely cheek, gave an air of inexpressible innocence.

She seemed to be scarcely seventeen. Her dress was a robe of pale blue taffety, fastened at the breast by a clasp of pearls, and made so as to display to the greatest advantage the symmetry of her fine person. Altogether she was one of those kind beings that quickly awaken the feelings which rouse the passions into play.

Although her style of beauty did not at all resemble that of the Italian, still Osmond, from not having heard of the Marchesa having any female relative or other visitor at present with her than Lady Elizara de Molina, took it for granted that it was Lady Elizara whom he now saw, and under that persuasion could not forbear involuntarily exclaiming to himself, as he gazed upon the lovely creature....‘ Happy Placentia ! happiest of the happy, in having such a being destined to thy arms ! ’Tis well, ‘ ’tis fortunate I know thy enviable lot, else might my heart have yielded to her attractions. Have yielded !....A shake of the head, and deep sigh, finished the sentence.

In the dangerous pleasure of gazing on her, and list-

ening to her delightful strains, Osmond was not long indulged. In the course of a few minutes she laid aside her lute, quitted her seat, and, ere Osmond could get to any sufficient distance from the door at which he had been watching her to prevent a suspicion of having been so employed, she made her appearance in the outer room.

She started back on beholding him, and for a minute remained motionless ; then, again advancing, bowed slightly, in return to the profound obeisance he made her, as she glided past him, and descended to the grotto beneath.

Diffidence prevented Osmond from attempting to follow her steps, as, till properly introduced, he conceived it would be indecorous for him to attempt addressing her ; but though he had not thought so, still would the agitation, the confusion, he felt at having been surprised by her in such a manner have withheld him at the moment from making an effort for the purpose.

Chancing to cast his eyes towards the portico, he beheld her crossing a bridge thrown over a narrow part of the lake, which now appeared so conspicuous an object, he was much surprised he had not before noticed it. As soon as the thick shades on the opposite shore had hid her from his view, the spell which fascinated him to the spot being broken, and the surprise, nay perhaps uneasiness, his longer absence from the palace might occasion, occurring to his recollection, he repaired to the grotto ; and being convinced, from the direction she had taken, that there must be an outlet from it to the water, examined narrowly, and at length succeeded in discovering a small door, opening to the left bank. Along this he pursued his way to the bridge ; but what words can paint the astonishment he experienced, when, on reaching the spot where he had seen it, neither bridge nor vestige of a bridge were visible !

‘ Good heavens ! ’ he involuntarily exclaimed, as for a minute he became transfixed through surprise, ‘ is all I have seen then an illusion of the senses ? ’

With hasty steps he measured his way back, impatient to have the mystery explained. He found the boat where he had left it ; and leaping into it, succeeded in a few minutes in gaining the opposite shore.

He found the Marchesa in the saloon, evidently awaiting his return with impatience.

‘My dear Chevalier,’ she cried, eagerly advancing to meet him, the moment he made his appearance, ‘your friend is expecting you in his study.’

Bowing.... ‘I will do myself the honour of immediately attending him,’ he replied.

A servant was summoned to shew him the way. He found the Count seated with his back to the door, and apparently in a deep reverie. Dismissing the servant, he softly approached, and laid his hand upon his shoulder. The Count, without starting or evincing any emotion whatever, looked up, and on perceiving who it was.... ‘Ha! in accents of the greatest calmness, ‘my dear Munro, is that you? Your looks,’ attentively regarding the deeply-glowing cheek of Osmond, ‘give me pleasure, as they impart to me the gratifying assurance of your health having sustained no injury from the perils and fatigues you have recently undergone.’

‘No, thank Heaven, none whatever,’ returned Osmond.

‘You have been taking a ramble, I understand,’ rejoined the Count.

‘Yes, an enchanting one. I wish you had accompanied me in it, as I think the freshness of the morning air and the beauty of the prospects could not have failed of reviving your spirits.’

‘My dear friend,’ gravely replied the Count, motioning for him to take a seat beside him, ‘I have been much better employed; which I am persuaded you will concur with me in thinking, when I inform you that the principal part of the morning has been spent by me in endeavouring to collect my too long scattered ideas, and laying down rules for the regulation of my future conduct. I confess I was cruelly agitated on my arrival here; but considering this is my first visit to the castle since the death of my dear and ever-to-be lamented uncle, that is not a circumstance to be wondered at. No sooner, however, did I a little recover from the emotions thus excited in my mind, than I resolved to set about the task I so faithfully promised you to undertake, name-

ly, that of trying to conquer my passions. I really am ashamed of having been so long the sport of every gale that blew. I now see clearly that without steadiness a man can never hope to support the dignity of his nature, or possess a chance of tranquillity. Instead, therefore, of any longer beholding me like the flexile ozier, trembling and agitated on every occasion, expect, in future, to see me like the firm rock, over which the tempests rave and billows roar, without making any impression on it.'

'Nay, I hope not,' returned Osmond, with forced gravity, but an inward smile, too well acquainted with the disposition of the Count, not to be almost convinced that his present resolution would occasion no greater alteration in him than the many others of a similar nature he had formed; 'since the man who cannot be moved by the occurrences of this life, is even more to be pitied than he who suffers himself to be too greatly affected by them....his want of sensibility keeping him a stranger to a thousand delicious sensations.'

'Better remain unacquainted with these than enjoy them at the expence of dignity and ease.'

'Let reason only have dominion over sensibility; and believe me, my dear friend,' resumed Osmond, with solemn earnestness, 'so far from degrading, it will ennoble our character, and render still more exquisite our pleasures.'

'Well, when once I have got my feelings in complete subjection, I may perhaps yield to it; but not till then.... not till I am thoroughly convinced I can command myself. But the period in which I shall be enabled to do this is not, I trust, very far distant. Indeed, I almost feel as if it were already arrived. Yes, I cannot help persuading myself that I have already, by dint of argument, acquired that philosophic coolness which prevents a man being disturbed by any circumstance. At all events, I am thoroughly convinced that there are no emotions, however violent, which I should not be able to conceal.'

'I see you are doubtful of this,' perceiving Osmond smile....'O would to Heaven,' starting from his chair, and clasping his hands together, 'something was this in-

stant to occur, to give me an opportunity of proving to you that you are too incredulous.'

'What!' demanded Osmond, also rising, conceiving he could not have a better opening than the one thus afforded him for breaking the intelligence he had to communicate, 'do you think you could avoid appearing moved, if you heard that your friend the Duke de Molina was not mortally wounded by you?'

'I should certainly,' returned the Count, but with an air of the greatest *nonchalance*, 'be pleased at the information, but neither transported out of myself, nor yet extremely surprized at it; consequently could, without any difficulty, retain my composure.'

'Not surprized at such intelligence!' repeated Osmond involuntarily, and in accents demonstrative of his being greatly so himself by the assertion.

'No; for 'tis such as for some time past I have thought it very likely I should yet receive.'

'What! after telling me the Duke dropt lifeless at your feet!'

'Fainting, my dear friend....fainting, I only meant,' said the Count coolly.

'Good heavens! exclaimed Osmond, with irrepressible emotion....then a little more calmly, 'And did you never take any pains to ascertain his fate?'

'My dear creature,' cried the Count, 'I was so occupied in pursuit of his sister, that I had neither time nor opportunity.'

'Well,' resumed Osmond, eager to communicate the joyful tidings with which he was charged, and also convinced, from what the Count had said on the subject, no farther preparation relative to the Duke de Molina was necessary, 'you were not mistaken in your surmises of yet having pleasing intelligence concerning your noble friend. He lives....lives to renew his intimacy with you.'

'And pray my dear friend,' asked the Count, but without any alteration in his looks, or the accent in which he had just before spoken, 'how came you by this intelligence?'

'The Marchesa was my author,' replied the astonished Osmond....astonished at the seeming apathy with which

the Count received information, which, notwithstanding his being in some degree prepared for it, would he feared have overpowered him with joy.

‘Strange that she should not have imparted it to me,’ somewhat thoughtfully, resumed the Count.

‘She feared being unable to support the sight of the emotions she imagined it would cause you.’

‘Ah, what a convincing proof of her knowing nothing of the revolution that has taken place in my disposition !’

A revolution, indeed, Osmond now began to fear, of a most unpleasant nature ; else he could not possibly, he thought, have heard of the safety of the man for whom he professed so great a regard, the brother too of the woman he adored, with the indifference he had done. In a word, he began to think, from the manner in which he now conducted himself, that owing to the great fatigue of mind and body he had lately gone through, he was beginning to fall into a lethargic state ; and under this idea, determined to be very brief with regard to Lady Elizara, conceiving, if any thing could rouse him from such a dangerous one, it would be the tidings he had to communicate respecting her.

Accordingly.... ‘Well, my dear Count,’ he proceeded, ‘doubtless nothing is now wanting to complete your happiness, but an assurance of Lady Elizara’s being still unmarried.’

‘It certainly would contribute towards it,’ replied the Count, but with the most perfect calmness, ‘since I think it impossible she could ever enjoy felicity with such a man as Salvilina.’

‘And is it only on that account you would be pleased to hear she was not his bride ?’

‘Why, not altogether,’ quietly seating himself in the chair he had just before vacated ; ‘but while I acknowledge this, permit me also to say, that to hear she was free this moment would not occasion the slightest alteration in my manner ; for never again will I, I am resolved, suffer myself to be affected as I have heretofore been by joy or woe. Henceforward I am determined to meet with the same fortitude, the same composure, whatever may befall me.’

‘ You may determine, but, pardon me for adding, I doubt much your being able to do so. Yes, notwithstanding your boasted philosophy, I cannot help thinking that you could not hear of Lady Elizara being at this very moment under the roof with you, and not only at liberty, but inclined to crown without delay your fondest wishes, without being at least a little agitated.’

‘ No, no, not in the smallest degree, I assure you, my friend,’ leaning back in his chair, and jogging one foot over the other, with an air of the greatest indifference.

‘ What ! not if you were positively assured she was in the castle....assured that in another moment you might have her in your arms ; that beloved, that faithful, that divine girl, (speaking a little more feelingly on the subject than perhaps he would have done but for the incident in the grotto) whom you have so long doated on, and despaired of ever possessing ?’

‘ No, no,’ shaking his head ; ‘ and now, my dear friend, I trust you will no longer doubt my having obtained that command over my feelings I wished for.’

‘ Indeed, my dear Count, I cannot believe it possible you could receive such intelligence unmoved....could hear that your Elizara was actually at this moment in the castle of Acerenza without emotion.’

‘ Ah !’ with some little change of voice and countenance, ‘ I wish it was in any one’s power to assure me she was.’

‘ It is in mine,’ exclaimed Osmond.

The Count started. ‘ Don’t trifle with me,’ he cried.

‘ Heavens ! could you think it possible I would trifle with you on such a subject ? Upon my honour, my soul,’ with a degree of vehemence he had never before spoken with, observing the Count still regarding him with a doubtful look, ‘ I am serious. She is....your Elizara is at this instant in the castle ; and long ere this I make no doubt expected to have seen you at her feet.’

The Count heard no more. He started from his seat, with a precipitancy that caused him to upset both the celestial and terrestrial globe, and catching Osmond in his arms, rapturously embraced him, as if he had mistaken him for the fair Elizara herself. Then starting away a few paces, he exclaimed....

‘ Oh my soul’s joy !
 If after every tempest comes such calm,
 May the winds blow till they have waken’d death;
 And let the lab’ring bark climb hills of seas
 Olympus high, and duck again as low
 As hell’s from heaven. If it were now to die,
 ’Twere now to be most happy ! for I fear
 My soul has her content so absolute,
 That not another comfort like to this
 Succeeds in unknown fate,’

And with these words he flew out of the room, leaving Osmond not a little diverted at his expence. On the subsiding of his involuntary mirth....‘ What a proof, thought he, ‘ does the poor Count furnish of the difficulty which attends the conquest of any long-indulged error or propensity, and also of the little knowledge we in general have of ourselves. In vaunting of his strength of mind and steadiness, under the firm persuasion of his possessing both, he but followed the example of many of his fellow-beings ; for how few of us are there who thoroughly know ourselves till put to the test. When no storm threatens....when no billows roar....when neither dazzling sunshine, nor appalling gloom, appears....when all around us is smooth and tranquil....how frequently do we boast of our firmness, and think ourselves equal to any exertion ! But if the prospects alter....if proofs of this boasted firmness are required....how often do we shrink back and disappoint every expectation we had raised ! With what indulgence, what candour, should not the consideration of this induce us to view the weaknesses and errors of our fellow-creatures ! the very best among us should regard these with lenity, since even such cannot, except tried, assure themselves that they might not fall into similar ones. ’Tis only such as have preserved their fortitude unshaken through all the changes of this life, whose principles, like the rock in the midst of the tumultuous billows of the deep, have remained firm in the midst of temptations, that have a right to animadvert with severity on the failings and frailties of others. These, however, are the very last who would do so ; since ever in proportion to the rectitude of the heart, is the commiseration with which it views the errors of others.’

These reflections were followed by others, on the happiness the Count was in the enjoyment of at the moment, and must look forward to, in a union with so angelic a creature as Elizara; and again the involuntarily sighing heart of Osmond pronounced him 'the happiest of the happy.'

His reflections were at length interrupted by the entrance of the Marchesa. She approached him with a joyful countenance, and extending her hand, which he respectfully took and raised to his lips.... 'My dear Chevalier,' she said, 'accept my thanks for the manner in which you have acquitted yourself of the task I enjoined you. The Count bears his unexpected good fortune with infinitely more composure than I could have expected he would, but doubtless owing to the manner you prepared him for it. Language is inadequate to express the obligations I consider myself under to you for the services you have rendered him and me: my actions will, I trust, more forcibly speak my sense of them.'

'I must intreat your Ladyship,' cried Osmond, a blush of modesty suffusing his cheek, 'not to touch again on such a subject. If you knew the pain it gives me, I feel assured you would not.'

'You shall be obliged; but the less I say the more I shall think. I have left your friend at the feet of his lovely mistress, and have already dispatched a courier to Naples, to apprise the Duke de Molina of the return of our dear truant, and to request his immediate presence here.'

Osmond, supposing some time would elapse ere the Count would desire his company, conceived he could not have a better opportunity than the present for bringing matters to a conclusion relative to the pirate and his crew. Accordingly, having previously inquired of the Marchesa whether she had any objection to his now doing so, or her sentiments respecting these culprits had undergone any change since her former conversation about them, he rang, on her replying in the negative, for them to be brought before him.

They were conducted into his presence by some of the principal domestics of the castle; and as they entered at

one door, the Marchesa, unwilling to be a spectator of the scene, retired at another.

Osmond did not inform them of her determination, until he had expiated for some time, and with much severity, on the offence they had meditated committing, and the fatal consequences that must inevitably have resulted to them from the perpetration of it; nor then, without assuring them, if any circumstance hereafter occurred to prove that the mercy her Ladyship extended to them failed of touching their hearts with repentance, and making them amend their lives, the punishment they now escaped would to a certainty fall upon them. They appeared contrite, and promised amendment; and having restored the articles they had extorted from him and the Count, were dismissed, and in a few minutes after, literally turned from the walls of Acerenza.

Scarcely did Osmond find himself alone, ere, contrary to his expectations, the Count, with all that breathless eagerness which ever marked his air and manner, when any thing interesting to him had occurred, burst into the room, for the purpose of conducting him to Lady Elizara.

‘She is impatient....she is all impatience,’ he exclaimed, grasping as he spoke, the arm of Osmond, ‘to behold my friend, my deliverer, my more than all, than either....the preserver of her adored self.’

Osmond made an effort to draw back, in order to obtain an opportunity of informing him that he had already seen Lady Elizara; lest otherwise, if he first received the information of his having done so from her, he might make enquiries of an embarrassing nature.

Regardless of this effort, however, the Count hurried him on to the apartment where Lady Elizara expected them, and to which, by this time, the Marchesa had returned.

Osmond entered it with a secret tremor, but the cause of which he either could not or did not like to surmise. But how quickly did it vanish, when, on casting his eyes on Lady Elizara, he beheld in her, although a very lovely girl, a very different beauty from the one he had seen in the grotto. Surprise (perhaps the sensation he expe-

rienced at the moment deserved another appellation) rivetted him for a minute to the floor ; then, recollecting himself, he suffered the impatient and impetuous Count to lead him forward.

Lady Elizara rose on his approach, and with a smile of gratitude and ineffable sweetness, extending her hand to him, begged his acceptance of her warmest acknowledgments for the obligations he had conferred upon her, and (her speaking eye glancing at the moment, but as if involuntarily, upon the Count) her friends.

Osmond, bowing respectfully upon her fair hand, assured her that she rated too highly the services alluded to ; yet at the same time that the hour which had given to him the happiness of rendering such, would ever be hallowed in his remembrance.

‘ Oh ! my Elizara,’ cried the enraptured Count, placing himself beside her, and gently circling her waist with his arm, on her resuming her seat, ‘ my heart seems as if it would burst with the fulness of its joy. Nothing... nothing but the presence of your brother, and the performance of the ceremony that secures you mine, is now wanting to render me the happiest being under the canopy of heaven. That over, and,’ suddenly starting up, ‘ I will let loose the dogs of war, and with wings as swift as meditation, or the thoughts of love, sweep to my revenge. Yes, the perfidious Salvilina shall then experience my vengeance....shall then know that a spirit like mine is not to be insulted or wronged with impunity.’

The Marchesa and Lady Elizara both looked alarmed at this declaration. The latter, however, better concealing her fears than the former... ‘ I am glad I know your determination in time, Count,’ cried she, with a laughing air ; ‘ for as I have no desire to play the part of a widowed bride, I am resolved, except you faithfully promise not to do any thing likely to endanger your safety till I have told you I am tired of you, which Heaven knows may be much sooner than you are aware of, not to change my present state.’

‘ You are right, perfectly right, Lady Elizara, in forming such a resolution,’ said the Marchesa ; ‘ and I will uphold you in it with all my heart.’

‘Assuredly, cried Osmond, ‘every one must concur with your Ladyship in thinking so.’

‘What!’ most impatiently demanded the Count, ‘agree in thinking that I deserve to have my happiness retarded, except I give up my revenge!’

‘My dear Count,’ proceeded Osmond, rising, and laying his hand on his arm, ‘believe me, as one of our most sublime poets has said....

‘Revenge, tho’ sweet at first,
Bitter ere long, back on itself recoils.’

‘But to let such a villain escape unpunished!’ thoughtfully rejoined the Count.

‘He will not....be assured he will not, my dear Count,’ cried Osmond, with energy; ‘the goadings of his own conscience will not suffer him to do so.’

‘But when the wrongs I have received at his hand are known, what will the world say to my forbearance?’

‘That by practising such, you evinced a noble mind; since it certainly requires a much less effort to resent than forgive our injuries.’

‘You must indeed, my dear nephew,’ said the Marchesa, also leaving her chair, and approaching him, ‘pass over the conduct of Salvilina in silence, if you wish to make me any amends for all I have lately suffered on your account.’

‘Yes, and instantly make a promise to that effect,’ added Lady Elizara, with an air of the most playful gaiety, and a bewitching smile, ‘or I immediately retract the concessions I have made in your favour.’

The Count cast a half-smiling, half-reproachful look at her at these words; then, after a little further hesitation.... ‘Well, I am conquered,’ cried he; ‘I submit: who can resist the pleadings of those they love?’

A desultory and agreeable conversation of some length followed this amicable adjustment relative to Salvilina; after which the party broke up to dress for dinner.

Impatient to relate the incident of the grotto, Osmond attended the Count to his dressing-room, for the purpose of revealing it to him.

The Count listened to him with the most profound

attention. On his concluding....¹ So very handsome, say you?' cried he. 'I really,' with thoughtfulness, 'cannot surmise who she is; but probably some visitor of my aunt's, who, finding how she was engaged this morning, repaired to the island, in order to avoid being any restraint upon her.'

'Should it prove so, then,' said Osmond eagerly, and with a flushing cheek, 'we are likely to see her at dinner.'

'Certainly; but should we not, depend upon it your curiosity respecting her shall not long remain ungratified, as I shall take care to inquire of my aunt about her. As to the bridge, which gave you such astonishment, it is the ingenious contrivance of the Marchesa; and turning on a pivot, can, with the greatest ease imaginable, be thrown from the island, across the lake, to which, by touching a spring, it immediately flies back to its shelter, amidst tufts of low trees and bushes, that completely hide it from casual observation. By being able to set it aside in this manner, the appearance of the island is rendered still more romantic, and an opportunity afforded of sailing entirely round it.'

'It does honour to her Ladyship's taste and ingenuity,' observed Osmond, 'and renders still more delightful the charming spot we have been speaking of, by giving an air of enchantment to it.'

As soon as Osmond had finished dressing, he repaired to the chamber of the Count, who immediately attended him thence to the saloon, where, besides the Marchesa and her lovely young friend, they found a large party assembled, in honour of his Lordship's arrival, of which early intimation that day had been given throughout the neighbourhood.

To these friends, as soon as they had paid their congratulatory compliments, Osmond was introduced, in a manner that ensured him the most gracious reception.

There were several pretty women present; and in the course of a few minutes, the Count found an opportunity of inquiring of Osmond by a glance, whether his fair incognito was amongst the number of these? to which in-

quiry the other replied by a significant shake of the head.

To all the refinements of modern luxury, such as Osmond had witnessed in the mansion of Lord O'Sinister, was here united a degree of princely magnificence, which heightened the effect these refinements were calculated to have upon the senses.

But neither produced such an effect upon the mind of Osmond as the winning manners of his noble hostess, and the not less conciliating deportment of the other members of her family.

The Marchesa Morati, although at this period somewhat advanced in the autumn of her days, still retained vestiges of superior beauty ; but though she had not possessed a trace of this, still would she have been a fascinating object, from the softness and urbanity of her manners, the dignity of her air, the elegance of her movements, the wish she on every occasion manifested to promote the happiness of others, and the sense and spirit which marked her conversation, and proclaimed her understanding and accomplishments of the first rate. At this juncture, she was rendered still more interesting by the pensive cast which grief for her beloved lord had given to her features, and which evidently proved that the cheerfulness she at present displayed was not the result of inclination, but assumed for the purpose of rendering still more perfect the felicity of her nephew and his fair mistress.

To the playful vivacity and amiable ingenuousness of youth, the latter added all those winning graces that spring from culture and refinement. Her beauty, of the true Italian kind, was highly attractive ; her person was tall, and strikingly elegant ; her face a fine oval ; her complexion dark, but clear, and made to appear still more delicate by the contrasting darkness of her luxuriant hair ; her eyes were black, large, sparkling and so expressive, that language was scarcely necessary to explain her meaning. In a word, she was altogether so bewitching an object, as fully to justify, in the opinion of Osmond, the adoration with which the Count regarded her.

Not inferior to the admiration and esteem with which he regarded her and her noble friend, was that which they experienced for him. The fine openness of his countenance, its candour and sweetness, the easy elegance of his figure, the unstudied gracefulness of his manner, the persuasive eloquence with which he delivered his sentiments, the pleasingly-modulated tones of his voice....all excited an immediate prepossession in their minds in his favour, such as would have insured to him their notice and attentions, even though he had not been introduced to them as he was, under the character of a preserver.

During dinner, the conversation was general, and of the most animated description ; but even if it had been less so, Osmond would still have found sufficient in the costly embellishments of the banquetting-room, and the varied and extensive prospect its long range of lofty lattices, now all thrown open to admit the air, commanded, to have amused and engaged his attention.

Immediately before them extended a spacious and delicious flower-garden, with several beautiful fountains adorned with figures of the finest marble, and cooling and embalming the air with their silvery waters ; and further on a vast tract of country, finely diversified and enlivened with flocks and herds, and scattered cottages, half shrouded by the luxuriance of the foliage, amidst which they reared their humble heads, and which here and there admitted partial views of the sea, reflecting all the glittering glories of the sun ; the whole bounded by aspiring mountains, gradually receding and fading into the mist of distance.

After dinner the company became scattered, every one amusing themselves according to their respective inclinations. Some sat down to cards in the saloon ; and others in detached parties, dispersed themselves over the gardens, which, as evening advanced, were splendidly illuminated, and furnished with music and refreshments.

Osmond, in the course of the evening, found an opportunity of detaching the Count for a few minutes from the rest of the party.

‘Well, my dear Count,’ he anxiously cried, on drawing him aside, ‘well (looking at him with an air of impatience,) have you inquired.....’

‘About the fair stranger....yes, but to no purpose. Both my aunt and Lady Elizara plead ignorance concerning her. I am, therefore, inclined to believe her, from this circumstance, neither more nor less than a pretty little *femme de chambre* belonging to the castle.’

‘No, no,’ hastily exclaimed Osmond, ‘’tis impossible. Her look, her air, her dress, her appearance altogether, permit me not to harbour a doubt of her being of superior rank.’

‘Strange ! then who can she be ?’ returned the Count, with a musing air. Then, after a pause of a minute.... ‘I shall inquire in another quarter to-morrow, and flatter myself with being more successful.’

Osmond was highly pleased with this assurance. ‘And yet why should I be so anxious to discover her ?’ he cried to himself ; ‘why stimulate enquiries that can obtain for me nothing but an idle gratification ? since, whether she be married or unmarried, titled or untitled, portioned or portionless, I am equally interdicted by my situation from thinking of her.’

Still, however, notwithstanding this reflection, he could not help continuing to wish to learn who she was.

His impatience to gratify the curiosity awakened in his mind by the description he had received of the scenes surrounding the abode of which he had so unexpectedly become an inmate, was too great, and the impression made by recent occurrences still too lively, to permit of his remaining long in an inactive state.

At an early hour the next morning, he forsook his couch ; and finding, on quitting his chamber, that the family were not yet up, sallied forth,

Involuntarily, perhaps, he bent his steps towards the grove which the preceding day had hid the lovely stranger from his view ; and through its verdant mazes was pursuing his way to the island, when, chancing to cast his eyes around him, he beheld her reading upon a moss-covered bank, overshadowed with flowering umbrage.

CHAP. XVII.

'As I listen'd to her,
The happy hours pass'd by us unperceiv'd ;
So was my soul fix'd to the soft enchantment.'

Rowe.

OSMOND instantly became motionless, but quickly recovered the power of motion, on catching the eyes of the beautiful stranger.

'I greatly fear, Madam,' he involuntarily exclaimed, on seeing her start up on beholding him, and look as if inclined to fly, 'that I have been so unfortunate as to alarm you.'

'No, Sir,' bowing to his salutation, but not without a little hesitation, as if somewhat flurried, and a deepening blush upon her lovely cheek, over which her fair hair lightly fluttered, 'twas the suddenness with which you appeared that made me appear as if you had done so.'

'For having been the occasion of any disturbance to you, permit me, Madam,' cried Osmond, in the most respectful accent, his dark and eloquently-expressive eyes beaming with admiration, 'to entreat your forgiveness.'

'You have it, Sir. They must have a strange temper indeed, who could not readily pardon what was not intentional.'

'My intrusion was certainly not intentional; but.... but....truth obliges me to declare'....and as he spoke he stole a glance, half timid, half expressive of the feelings she had inspired him with, at her, 'that on my entering the grove, had I known it concealed you, I could not have forborne seeking the spot.'

'You are polite, Sir; carelessly adjusting a veil of gauze she had on, and quitting the arbour.

'Nay,' in an alarmed accent, terrified at the idea of his having offended her by what he had just said, 'let me not, I conjure you, Madam, be the means of driving you hence.'

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as that which had urged him to trace her flying steps. The impression which her beauty had previously made on him was this day strengthened by the harmony of her accents, the sweetness and complacency of her manner. But if her voice dwelt upon his ear, so also did an unwelcome one which had so suddenly, so roughly, and so gently, so unexpectedly, called her away: and equal to his wish to learn who she was, was the one he experienced, to know what relationship or connection subsisted between her and the person from whom it proceeded. At length, starting from the reverie into which she had plunged him, he returned to the spot where he had surprised her; and throwing himself upon the turf she had pressed, resigned himself for some minutes to the upward contemplation of her charms, during which he more than once repeated her name....the name of Coriolia, which, to his ear at least, had music in it. Then, in order to try and give a turn to his thoughts, the indulgence of which he was convinced could not fail of instilling pain upon him, he took out his pocket-book and pencil, and committed to paper the ideas suggested by a very fanciful dream of the preceding night, in which the fair stranger was represented as a sovereign princess, driven from her possession in a neighbouring state by a cruel usurpation, which, after going through unheard of dangers, he had the good fortune to overthrow, and was rewarded for his services with her hand. The following was his

ADDRESS TO FANCY.

Fancy, aerial goddess, why
With phantoms tempt my view;
With joys that mock me as they fly,
That fade as I pursue?

Let not thy fascinating art
My senses still enchain;
Nor feed the flame within my heart,
That riots in each vein.

At least with Reason share the sway,
Infringe not on her right;
Permit her government by day,
And yours shall be the night.

THE DISCARDED SON.

My waking dreams, ah let her guide,
 (For what is life but those ?)
 Over the visions you preside,
 My sleeping ones compose.

Exhibit then thy magic wand,
 Conduct me through its charms ;
 Elysian fields, the faries land,
 Or to....Cordelia's arms.

With melody enchant mine ears,
 The seraph's song of praise,
 The music of the moving spheres,
 In fair Cordelia's lays.

Lead where the fays and fairies dance,
 By moonlight on the green ;
 Or where Diana holds her court,
 Amid the sylvan scene.

Let vivid flowers bedeck the ground
 With variegated blooms ;
 And sportive zephyrs waft around
 Their exquisite perfumes.

Reveal the Muse's coy retreat,
 (So difficultly won)
 Point out their wild sequester'd seat,
 On sacred Helicon.

With raptures of poetic fire
 My bosom now inflame ;
 Pure flowing from Apollo's lyre,
 Or Aganippe's stream.

With thy creative power call,
 The regions of delight,
 The gods' abodes ; and open all
 Their glories to my sight.

The pleasures of the blest above,
 Teach me entranc'd to feel ;
 Ethereal joys, celestial love,
 O'er all my senses steal.

Enchantress, if to sleep you give
 Such extasy of bliss ;
 It is to die, and not to live,
 When I awake from this.

The encreasing heat at length reminding Osmond of the lateness of the hour, he returned to the castle ; and finding the family were already assembled at breakfast, hastened to the saloon, where, besides those he expected

to see, he found several of the guests of the preceding day.

As soon as breakfast was over, a significant glance from Osmond induced the Count to conduct him to his study, where, as soon as they entered, Osmond recounted the incident of the morning.

When he had ceased speaking.... 'The person of whom I meant to inquire concerning your mysterious divinity,' cried the Count, 'is a young man of the name of Mactalla, a domestic in the castle, and the son of an Irishman, who served during the late monarchy as a soldier in the Irish brigades in France, and who, in that situation, having had an opportunity of rendering a signal service to my uncle, the Marchese Morati, who, disliking a life of total indolence, also served in one of these for some time, had his discharge obtained, and was brought to Acerenza, where he continued till his death, leaving his son, who was also his companion hither, to the protection of his generous patrons. The young man has proved himself fully deserving of their kindness: and beside being faithful, sincere, and affectionate, is shrewd, smart, and lively, in a word, every way qualified to make discoveries of the nature you are now anxious for; and therefore I resolved, from my conviction of this, to apply to him on the subject, when I found I could obtain no satisfaction from the Marchesa or Lady Elizara.'

'I presume, Count,' said Osmond, smiling a little archly, 'he has given you unquestionable proofs of his cleverness in the way you allude to.'

'O no, no, upon my honour,' returned the Count; 'for you know, my dear creature, I was always in love.'

'And therefore did I advance such a supposition.'

'But I mean,' returned the Count, a little confusedly, 'with only one object.'

Osmond again smiled, perhaps a little incredulously; and the Count rang for Mr. Mactalla, who in a few minutes, made his appearance, and presented to the view of Osmond the figure of a tall slight young man, about four or five-and-twenty, and with a countenance replete with vivacity, good nature, and good humour.

The Count at the request of Osmond, entered into no very minute particulars respecting the fair stranger ; but merely said his curiosity had been excited by the appearance of such a person near the castle, and that he much wished if he (Mactalla) did not already know who she was, he would endeavour to discover.

Mactalla, after musing for some minutes....‘I have it,’ cried he, suddenly striking his hand on his forehead, ‘I have it, by the Powers,’ in accents of delight, and filiping his fingers ; I can guess who she is....yes, yes, ’tis plain enough.’

‘Indeed ! Pray who is she then ?’ demanded the Count, somewhat impatiently.

‘Why your Lordship can’t have forgot your surly neighbour, Signor Trapani.’

‘No, the unsocial being. But what of him ? what has he to say to the young lady in question ?’

‘She is his niece, I am persuaded.’

‘His niece !’ echoed the Count.

‘Yes, I am certain she is. Thinking his servants did not pay him proper attention, and beside that they took advantage of his frequent illnesses to plunder him, he lately fetched from Naples the destitute orphan daughter of a brother of his, for the purpose of nursing him, and having an eye to matters when he is not able himself ; and finding her attentions to him and his concerns not only pleasing but serviceable, is unwilling to let her quit the house for a minute, except in his company, lest she should meet with something that might induce her to leave him entirely. Spite of all his watchings, however, she sometimes contrives to make her escape into these grounds, but always with fear and trembling, as more than once her steps have been traced by him.

‘And prithee where didst thou pick up all this intelligence ?’

‘From very good authority, please your Lodship.... from a young damsel belonging to his family.’

‘And amongst other things she told thee, did she mention the name of the young lady ?’

‘No, Signor, no ; but described her as a very angel.’

‘Yes, yes, it must be her,’ cried the Count, in an in-

ward voice. Then again addressing Mactalla....' Let horses be got ready for the Chevalier and me immediately, and do you hold yourself in readiness to attend us. I am resolved on beating up the quarters of Signor Trapanti this morning, if for no other purpose for that of plaguing him for his sins.'

The moment Mactalla withdrew to execute the orders of the Count, Osmond, who till then had pretended to be employed in looking over the books, hastily approached the Count....' And pray who is Signor Trapanti?' eagerly burst from his lips.

'An old superannuated rake, who, having no longer power to follow his vicious propensities, has turned misanthrope, and now rails at what he formerly pursued: His domain adjoins this, and his fortune is extremely large, and every year encreasing, as he is now as miserly as he was formerly profuse, insomuch that for some time past he has declined mixing in society.'

'Should he suspect the motive of the visit you are about paying him, may he not,' said Osmond, in a hesitating accent, 'be tempted to confine more strictly his lovely niece, and thus render still more unhappy her situation?'

'We must manage matters in such a way as to prevent his having a suspicion of the kind. While you entertain the niece, I'll contrive to keep him employed.'

'Ah, my dear Count,' rejoined Osmond with a sigh, 'why should I attempt to pursue an object I can never hope to possess? My situation totally precludes my entertaining one of the kind. Would it not, therefore, be better for me not to....'

'Stuff! stuff!' impatiently interrupted the Count; 'I will not suffer you to proceed in such a strain. On going this morning to Signor Trapanti's I am positively determined, and equally determined that you shall accompany me: not another word, therefore, on the subject.'

CHAP. XVIII.

' But I must rouse myself, and give a stop
To all those ills by headlong passion caus'd ;
In minds resolv'd, weak love is put to flight,
And only conquers when we dare not fight ;
But we indulge our harms, and while he gains
An entrance, please ourselves unto our pains.'

DRYDEN.

WE are easily persuaded to do what we like. Osmond, therefore, having satisfied his scruples by the effort he had made to excuse himself from going whither his heart had already travelled (for that the fair stranger was the niece of Signor Trapanti, he had not a doubt, from what Mactalla had said,) allowed himself to be over persuaded by the impetuosity of the Count ; and the horses being announced at the moment, they directly mounted, and set forward, attended by Mactalla.

Their ride was through delightful groves, along the banks of purling streams, so bespread with flowers, that it seemed as if Flora herself had just been wandering along them. ' A verd'rous wall' hid the dwelling of Signor Trapanti from casual observation. On penetrating this, Osmond beheld a spacious structure, but which from the alterations suspicion and spleen had caused the owner to make in it, infinitely more resembled the baronial residence of a chief of old, than the light and airy structures of the Italians.

As Osmond's eyes wandered over the gloomy abode, he involuntarily but silently, exclaimed to himself.... ' Fit dwelling, indeed, for misanthropy ; but ah, how unfit a one for youth, for beauty, for sensibility !'

' I apprise you in time,' said the Count, while Mactalla was knocking at the gate, ' that we are likely to be refused admission here ; but having once commenced the siege, I am resolved on no account to raise it, without bringing the governor to comply with my wishes.'

' Surely if once denied admission, you don't mean to persevere in demanding it ?'

‘ Indeed but I do. Patience and perseverance are not quite such great strangers to me as you may imagine.’

An old withered porter, nearly with age grown double, but still with something facetious in his countenance, answered Mactalla’s summons ; and on learning the occasion of it, positively declared his master from home.

‘ Come hither, Sir,’ said the Count, beckoning to him. On his obeying.... ‘ Can you look me in the face,’ he added, ‘ and repeat this assertion?’

‘ Yes, upon my veracity, my Lord, can I,’ bowing profoundly low ; ‘ the Signor and my young lady his niece went early this morning to Signor Thomaso’s, the lawyer in Acerenza, on business of great moment.’

‘ Signor Thomaso ! ah, I know him well....as great a rogue as the profession was ever blessed with. I once employed him in a law-suit ; he took fees on both sides, and cheated me most horridly. I’ll follow your master to his house, and if I don’t find him there, or that he has been there woe be to you, old Cerberus.’

‘ Osmond, apprehensive that their pursuing Signor Trapanti might be the means of involving the lovely niece in some unpleasant predicament, earnestly endeavoured, as soon as they had turned their backs on his mansion, to dissuade the Count from such a measure, but to no purpose ; he persisted in riding on towards Acerenza, but was prevented entering it, by meeting the carriage of Signor Trapanti some little distance from it, into which on discovering whose it was, the eyes of Osmond instantly darted ; but instead of beholding the face that had charmed him, he beheld in that of the young lady who occupied a seat in it, one he had never before seen.

‘ Upon my honour, my dear fellow,’ cried the Count, on learning his disappointment, ‘ I am almost inclined to believe that it is an ideal being you have been speaking of all this time.’

‘ I wish you could make me think so.’

‘ Well, well, we’ll endeavour to prove whether ’tis so or not. Mactalla shall immediately be set to work.’

‘ No, no,’ cried Osmond, but so faintly, that the Count plainly saw his opposition to the measure was but affect-

ed. 'At all events,' added he, 'don't, I conjure you, mention the affair to the Marchesa or Lady Elizara; for I should be very unwilling to appear ridiculous in their eyes.'

'O rely on my secrecy; but at the same time permit me to observe, that your admiration of one beautiful woman could never make you appear ridiculous in the eyes of another.'

This day, as on the preceding one, a splendid party dined at the castle, and in the evening there was a grand display of fire-works on the lake; after which music and dancing filled up the principal part of the night.

The Count had earnestly entreated that his nuptials might immediately take place; but a conviction of the impropriety of such a measure, and the likelihood there was of its giving offence to the Duke de Molina, made the Marchesa, and of course Lady Elizara, deaf to all his solicitations on the subject.

To fill up the interval of expectation in such a manner as should somewhat beguile it of its tediousness to him, the Marchesa contrived a constant succession of amusements at the castle. For an instant, these never rendered Osmond forgetful of the fair and mysterious stranger. In defiance of prudence, and the arguments of reason, he still continued to dwell on her idea, and haunt the spots where he thought there was the greatest probability of meeting her, but to no purpose. Day after day wore away without seeing her again; nor was Mactalla, as he learnt from the Count, more successful in his researches after her.

At length the Duke de Molina arrived, and the morning after his lovely sister and her amiable lover were united in the chapel of the castle, and in the presence of a number of distinguished friends and relatives. From the chapel they returned in procession to the grand saloon, where a numerous assemblage waited to offer their congratulations, and participate in the festivities of the day. Nothing could exceed the splendor and gaiety displayed on this occasion.

Ere the congratulations which this joyful event gave rise to were well over, the Marchesa drew Osmond aside,

and insisted, in order she said, to keep alive the remembrance of it in his mind, and of course his wishes for the continuance of the happiness it occasioned, on his acceptance of a ring of considerable value, and a cabinet filled with precious antiques ; after which the Count, with a positive threat of demolishing both, if not instantly taken by him, presented him with a gold box, enriched with diamonds, and containing his picture, and a highly ornamented and valuable watch and chain.

Osmond felt almost overpowered by the generosity and kindness of these noble friends ; he thought they rated too highly their obligations to him : but at the same time, their having done so, by still further convincing him of the nobleness of their natures, heightened his regard and esteem for them.

Towards the decline of this joyful day, either owing to the languor over-fatigued spirits is apt to create, or to the pleasure he derived from sometimes having an uninterrupted opportunity of indulging his reflections, Osmond gradually detached himself from the gay and brilliant crowd that filled the palace and gardens of Acerenza, and wandered away to an undulating valley, shrouded by thick aspiring woods, and refreshed by a clear and wildly-deviuous stream. The delightful contrast which its tranquillity formed to the noise and bustle he had just left....no sound meeting the ear save the faint rustling of the trees, and the warbling of the birds that thronged them, together with the magnificence of the scene, tinted as it was with the crimson blush of evening, the warm glow which the setting sun pours over creation....awakened a soothing, a luxurious pleasure in the mind of Osmond....that serene delight, that ineffable feeling of benevolence, ' the parent of disinterested good will to others,' which the view of smiling nature never fails of exciting in a heart of sensibility.

' Of him who could unmoved behold such a scene as this,' cried Osmond, his eyes delightedly roving over it, ' with justice it might be said....he's fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils ; let no such man be trusted.'

As he pursued his walk and his reflections together, his attention was suddenly caught by a beautiful green

mount, majestically rising above the surrounding shades, and crowned with an open temple of white marble, covered with a dome of the same, supported by light pillars. Osmond, concluding from the elevation of this building it must command an enchanting prospect, eagerly ascended to it; but scarcely had he reached it, ere every sense became absorbed in surprise and admiration, at beholding on the opposite side, a few paces below it, seated like a mountain nymph upon a tufted sod, her shining tresses merely prevented from streaming in the light breeze that blew around her by a chaplet of wild flowers, her robe white and fluttering, and warm on her cheek the sultry season glowing, the lovely stranger.

He might perhaps have continued hours rivetted to the spot, had not the accidental turning of her head discovered him to her, and thus broke the spell that bound him.

On perceiving her rise hastily, as if with an intention of retreating, he darted forward, and throwing himself before her.... 'Oh do not,' he cried, in accents at once supplicating and impassioned, unable to resist the impulse of his feelings, 'do not let me be the means of still frightening you away. If you knew how restlessly, how ardently I have sought for such a minute as the present, you would not, I flatter myself, think of shortening it.'

He paused, in eager expectation of a reply. In vain, however, he looked for one. She spoke not, neither did she attempt to move; yet that something she wished to say, was evident from the expression of her countenance.

'Oh say,' resumed the impetuous youth, agitated by this silence beyond the power of controlling his emotions, 'how am I to interpret this silence? Am I to....?'

A loud hollo from the other side of the temple prevented his finishing this speech, and put the fair stranger to flight. He pursued her, perhaps involuntarily, and not without a wrathful invective against the person, whoever he was, that had driven her away; but ere he had got many yards in the tangled path into which she had darted, his cloaths got entangled in a bush of prickly shrubs, which his impetuosity made him overlook and

stumble amongst ; and before he could extricate himself, the person whose voice had occasioned all this confusion made his appearance, and presented to the view of Osmond the features of one of the guests of Acerenza.... an elderly gentleman of the name of Belermo, who set up for a great physiognomist ; and in order to make his talent known, and thus obtain for himself some little distinction, such as he was conscious, without making an effort for the purpose, he should vainly hope for, tormented every one with his observations. The high estimation in which he found Osmond was held at the palace of Acerenza, induced him to believe, if he could impress him with an opinion of his cleverness, he should reap some advantage from the circumstance ; he therefore attached himself to him as much as possible throughout the day ; and for the purpose of following up his plan respecting him, traced his steps.

‘ Ah, my dear young friend,’ he exclaimed, ‘ how much does your having stolen away from the madding crowd within, convince me that you are the young philosopher your countenance led me to believe !’

‘ Philosopher, Sir !’ repeated Osmond, perhaps a little sternly, doubtful at first whether he was not laughing at him ; but on looking earnestly in his face perceiving that he really was not... ‘ upon my word, Sir, you confer a title on me to which I make no pretensions.’

‘ And therefore do you merit it. Yes, your unassuming manners, your abstracted air, the indifference in which, to judge from your looks, you hold the pomps and vanities of this world....all confirm your right to the title ; a title which any one who is at all a physiognomist will at the first glance bestow upon you ; but never yet indeed was I mistaken in the judgments I formed from the countenance ; never yet.....’

‘ Some other time, Sir,’ cried Osmond, but not without a difficultly-suppressed laugh at this curious original, ‘ some other time,’ tearing away, as he spoke, his coat from the briars, I shall be happy to attend you, but at present I have an appointment elsewhere.’

‘ Nay, if it be to meditate on the beauties of nature, permit me to accompany you.’

‘You do me honour, Sir, by the request,’ returned Osmond, no longer able to smother his laughter; ‘but... then not knowing what to say, he stopt abruptly, and kissing his hand to him, vanished in a moment from his view,

In vain, however, he hurried down the path the fair stranger had taken...in vain explored every neighbouring bush and thicket...she was no where to be seen, neither any habitation to which she could have retreated; and at length he reluctantly ceased his pursuit of her for the present.

The idea that he should in all probability have discovered where she lived, and so have been enabled to learn who she was, but for the intrusion of Signor Balermo, so irritated him, that had he encountered him again at the moment, he would probably have given him some reason to retract his assertion of his being a philosopher.

But as reflection resumed its empire over him, all his anger was turned against himself. With confusion and remorse he thought of his conduct; his having dared situated as he was, to breathe a sentiment of tenderness, or evince a wish to inspire one.

Osmond was not of a disposition wilfully to indulge in what he conceived wrong. From this hour, therefore, he resolved on no more seeking the fair stranger, and on doing every thing in his power to detach his thoughts from her. The resolution was painful, but a conviction of the consequences of not attending to it being much more so, determined him on adhering to it.

The next morning, after breakfast, as he was sitting alone and rather pensively in his chamber, a gentle tap came to the door, and on his desiring the person to enter, Mactalla made his appearance.

‘Do I intrude, Signor,’ cried he, bowing.

Osmond nodded, and Mactalla, shutting the door, then approached him.

‘I have news for you, Signor,’ exclaimed he in a joyful accent, ‘I have news for you.’

Osmond started....‘News!’ repeated he, instantly concluding it was something relative to the fair stranger he had to communicate. Then recollecting his resolution

of the preceding night.... 'Have you?' said he, in a more composed accent, and resuming his seat.

'Yes, and that I have by the Powers. You must know, Signor, that yesterday, in searching after a pet dog of my Lady Marchesa's, in a remote and lonely part of the castle, long disused by the family, I chanced to discover her favourite waiting-woman in conversation with a young lady of great beauty, and who so strongly resembled the description given by my Lord the Count of the lady he set me upon making inquiries after, that I instantly resolved on questioning Madam Beatrice closely about her. Accordingly I lay in wait till she quitted the gallery in which I had surprised her; and then, by dint of cross questionings and coaxing, drew from her that the young lady in question was a Miss Raymond, the daughter of an English gentleman of fortune, but who, owing to an unfortunate affair of honour, had been under the necessity of quitting his own country, bringing with him his family, consisting of her and her mother; and who, having some reason to imagine that his steps were traced, had turned out of the straight road to Naples, for the purpose of taking refuge for a time in this castle, with the late owner of which, my Lord Marchese, he was formerly well acquainted, and of whose death he was ignorant at the time he formed this resolution. Within half a league of this he stopt, and dispatched a letter hither by a confidential servant, which the Marchesa opened, and finding it came from a person who had enjoyed the friendship of her Lord, she directly hastened to assure him in person of the asylum he required under her roof. Accordingly, in the dead of the night, he and his family were introduced into the castle, and immediately put in possession of apartments not likely to subject them to intrusion, and two of her household, on whose prudence and secrecy she particularly relied, appointed to wait on them. She and Lady Eliza spent much time in their company till the arrival of the Count, since which they have rarely been with them, lest their being so should expose them to his knowledge, and thus be the means of having them betrayed to that of others.'

if not possessed of the power of serving him in Italy. He reflected on the great uncertainty there was of his obtaining a settlement, at least such a one as he wished for, for some time in England ; as though, in order to prevent his spirits from sinking into utter despondence, he had endeavoured to buoy himself up with hopes of Lord O'Sinister's exerting himself to serve him, still he had never for an instant forgot how positively his Lordship had declared to him that he should not be able to do this essentially, if at all, for a considerable period ; and that Delacour's friends might not be inclined to exert their interest for any but their own immediate connexions. The result of these reflections, therefore, was his entreating the Count to have the goodness to explain himself, candidly acknowledging that the first road to honourable independence that opened to his view he would joyfully embrace.

'This is what I purpose,' replied the Count. 'The Duke D'Amalfi, a near relation of mine, and now at the head of affairs in Naples, has repeatedly assured me that nothing could possibly confer greater happiness on him than an opportunity of obliging me. I shall, therefore, if you permit, write immediately to recommend you to his patronage.'

Osmond accepted this proposal with joy and gratitude. Accordingly a courier was immediately dispatched by the Count with a letter to his noble relative concerning him,

To this an answer, not merely favourable but also highly flattering, was received at the expected time ; and the day after, Osmond began to make preparations for his departure from Acerenza. Too well aware of the injury he was doing to his future prospects, by wasting the present hours in idleness....of the welfare of his future days depending in all probability on the manner in which he employed the present time, to suffer himself to be prevailed on by the Count to defer it longer than was absolutely necessary.



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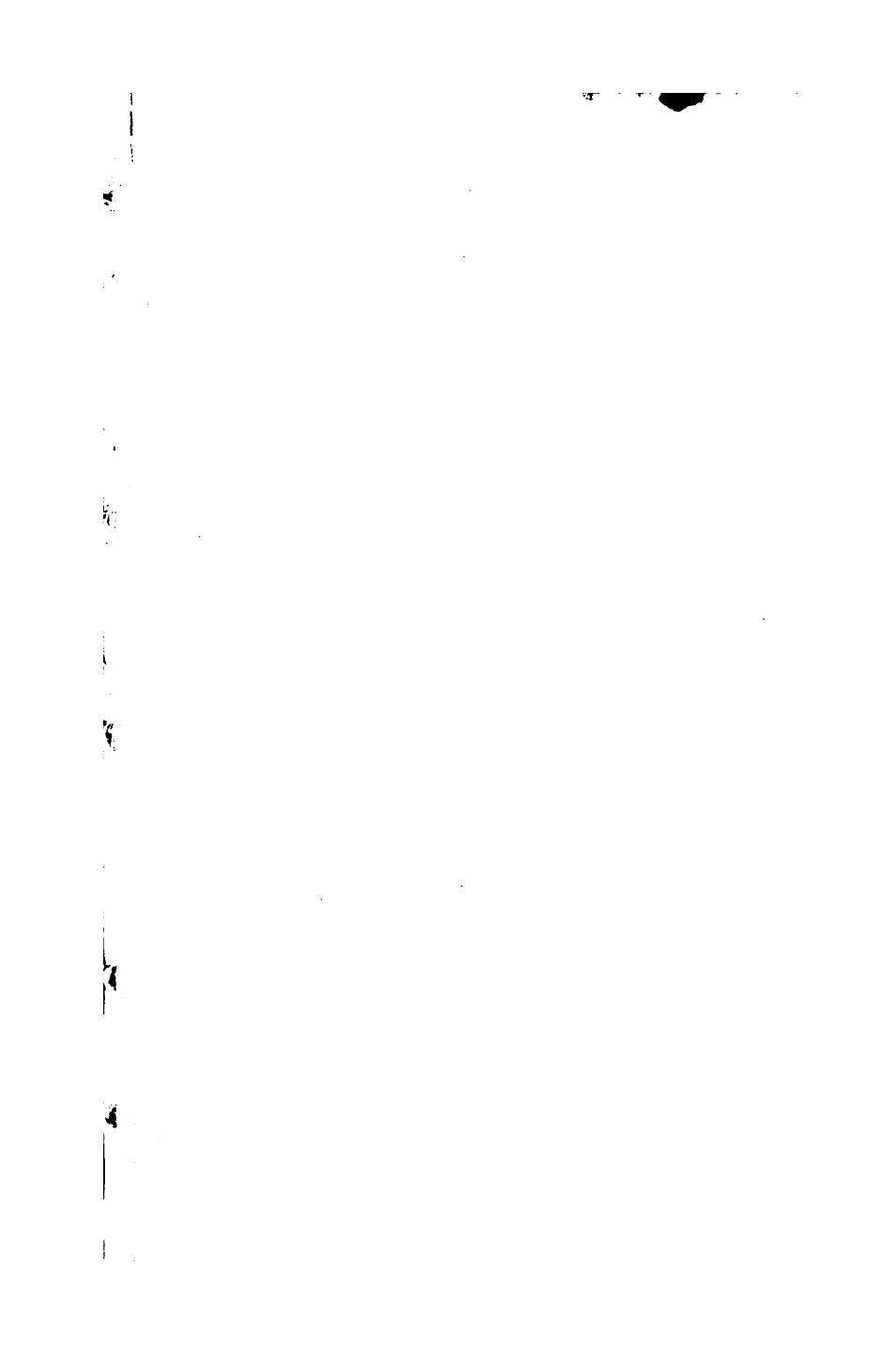
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